Understanding the relationship between income and voting: Are One Nation voters influenced by economic factors?

Glenda Bourne

The University of Notre Dame Australia

Follow this and additional works at: https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses

Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
Copyright Regulations 1969

WARNING
The material in this communication may be subject to copyright under the Act. Any further copying or communication of this material by you may be the subject of copyright protection under the Act.
Do not remove this notice.

Publication Details
Bourne, G. (2021). Understanding the relationship between income and voting: Are One Nation voters influenced by economic factors? (Master of Philosophy (School of Arts and Sciences)). University of Notre Dame Australia.
https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses/327

This dissertation/thesis is brought to you by ResearchOnline@ND. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses by an authorized administrator of ResearchOnline@ND.
For more information, please contact researchonline@nd.edu.au.
Understanding the relationship between income and voting: Are One Nation voters influenced by economic factors?

By Glenda Bourne

(BA; BBus)

Supervised by Dr Martin Drum
Co-Supervised by Dr Daniel Baldino

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Philosophy (Arts)

School of Arts and Sciences
Fremantle Campus
University of Notre Dame, Australia
September 2021
Declaration

To the best of the candidate’s knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published by another person, except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis is the candidate’s own work and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any institution.

Due to the nature of the research project, human subjects are not involved; therefore, ethical considerations of this research project are not applicable.

Signature:

Print Name: Glenda Bourne

Date: 8 September 2021
Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge and pay my respect to the Aboriginal people past and present as the traditional owners of the land, namely the Whadjuk Nyoongar people on which I conducted this research.

I also express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Martin Drum, thank you for your continuous support through each stage of my project. Your patience and guidance throughout my thesis were much appreciated, especially during the stressful periods.

I would also like to thank my editor, William Bowe, who also provided me with the voting and census datasets and gave invaluable advice on statistical analysis. I really appreciate the help you have given me, particularly during the editing process of my thesis.

I gratefully acknowledge the Australian government for funding this project under the RTP scheme.

Thank you also to my family, colleagues and friends for their support through my research and completion of the thesis.
Abstract

While economic voting has been analysed in detail in international studies, the phenomenon has been under-studied in the Australian context. This dissertation investigates the link between economic voting and the minor party vote in Australia by analysing the vote share for One Nation in Queensland at the 2016 Senate election and 2017 state election. Using linear regression, the relationship between income, unemployment and the One Nation vote proves to be statistically significant, but the relationship does not apply to areas with large populations of Indigenous people or voters from non-English speaking backgrounds. This study offers broad insights into the link between economic factors and minor party voting in Australia.
List of Publications

# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF PUBLICATIONS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 CONTEXT</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 TOPIC AND PURPOSE</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 SIGNIFICANCE</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 REVIEW OF LITERATURE</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.2 MINOR PARTY VOTING IN AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.3 INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: ECONOMIC VOTING AND ELECTIONS</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.2 AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT: ECONOMIC VOTING</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 METHODS AND METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 LIMITATIONS</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 THESIS CHAPTERS</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 CONCLUSION</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE: MINOR PARTY VOTING IN AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 THE RISE OF MINOR PARTY VOTING IN THE SENATE</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 THEORIES OF MINOR PARTY VOTING</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 MISTRUST IN DEMOCRACY</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 CULTURAL ANXIETY AND IDEOLOGY</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 CONCLUSION</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO: THE EMERGENCE OF ONE NATION</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 ONE NATION’S FIRST PERIOD OF ELECTORAL SUCCESS: 1998-2001</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 QUEENSLAND 1998 STATE ELECTION</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 1998 FEDERAL ELECTION</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3 SOURCES OF ONE NATION SUPPORT</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.4 DECLINING FORTUNES: 1999-2001</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 THE WILDERNESS YEARS: 2001-2016</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 1: Minor party votes (2013-2019) ........................................................................................................... 24
Table 2: Top 20 seats for One Nation support (primary and two-party preferred) at Queensland state election, June 1998 ......................................................................................................................... 36
Table 3: Seats won by One Nation at federal and state elections, 1998-2001 ........................................... 44
Table 4: Top ten booths for One Nation, primary vote – Senate election 2016 ........................................... 65
Table 5: Booths with zero primary votes for One Nation, primary vote – Senate election 2016 ........... 66
Table 6: One Nation vote and SA1 unemployment rate by polling booth, primary vote – Senate election 2016 ............................................................................................................................................. 67
Table 7: Regression results for One Nation Senate (primary) vote by polling booth at 2016 federal election (2016 unemployment rate model) .......................................................................................... 69
Table 8: Regression results for One Nation (primary) Senate vote by polling booth at 2016 federal election: growth in unemployment rate model (2011-2016) .................................................. 70
Table 9: Leichhardt booths and remote Indigenous communities ............................................................... 75
Table 10: Regression results for One Nation Senate vote by polling booth at 2016 federal election: median weekly family income model .......................................................................................... 76
Table 11: Regression results for One Nation primary Senate vote by polling booth at 2016 federal election: median weekly family income growth model .......................................................... 78
Table 12: Regression results for One Nation primary vote by polling booth at 2017 Queensland state election: median family income model ........................................................................... 85
Table 13: Regression results for One Nation primary vote by polling booth at 2017 Queensland state election: median family income growth model .......................................................................... 87
Table 14: Regression results for One Nation primary vote by polling booth at 2017 Queensland state election: unemployment model .............................................................................................. 87
Table 15: Regression results for One Nation primary vote by polling booth at 2017 Queensland state election: unemployment growth model .................................................................................. 88
Table 16: Indigenous population and One Nation primary vote at 2017 Queensland state election ..... 89
Table 17: Regression results for One Nation primary vote by polling booth in electorate of Cook at 2017 Queensland state election: median weekly family income model .................................................. 89
List of Figures

Figure 1: Rise in minor party voting in Senate, 2004-2019..........................................................23
Figure 2: Federal elections: One Nation Senate vote by state..................................................45
Figure 3: One Nation primary vote share at New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australian state elections.................................................................46
Figure 4: Unemployment rate and One Nation primary vote (percentage) at 2016 Senate election by polling booth (Queensland)...........................................................................71
Figure 5: Unemployment growth rate (between 2011 and 2016) and One Nation primary vote (percentage) at 2016 Senate election by polling booth (Queensland) ..............................................72
Figure 6: English spoken only and One Nation primary vote (percentage) at 2016 Senate election by polling booth (Queensland)..................................................................................73
Figure 7: Indigenous population and One Nation primary vote (percentage) at 2016 Senate election by polling booth (Queensland)..................................................................................74
Figure 8: Median family weekly income and One Nation primary vote (percentage) at 2016 Senate election by polling booth (Queensland)..............................................................................80
Figure 9: Median family weekly income and One Nation primary vote (percentage) at 2016 Senate election by polling booth (Western Australia).................................................................81
Figure 10: Median family weekly income and One Nation primary vote (percentage) at 2016 Senate election by polling booth (Victoria)..................................................................................82
Figure 11: Median weekly family income and One Nation primary vote at 2017 Queensland state election by polling booth...............................................................................................86
Introduction

1.0 CONTEXT

In 2016, Pauline Hanson’s One Nation party returned to federal parliament by winning four seats in the Senate, ending a hiatus that began in 2005. This forms part of a pattern of declining major party support that has been evident since 2007, with almost one in four Australians having voted for a minor party or independent candidate in the House of Representatives at the 2016 federal election.¹ This has been to the advantage of a wide diversity of parties on both right and left.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate whether economic voting models can explain such surges in support for minor parties, by examining the pattern of support for Pauline Hanson’s One Nation in Queensland. The pattern of support for One Nation, particularly in regional Queensland, suggests economic challenges may have played a role in the growing disaffection with the major parties.

The focus on Queensland, where the party is particularly strong, reflects the importance of regional political culture in explaining support for the party. However, it will be argued that One Nation’s rise can serve as a case study for regional minor parties in other states, of which there were two notable further examples at the 2016 election, both in states that had experienced significant economic challenges. One was the Jacqui Lambie Network in Lambie’s home state of Tasmania, where she was elected to the Senate with 8.3% of the vote. The other was in South Australia, where the Nick Xenophon Team won three seats in the Senate and one in the House of Representatives with 21.74% of the vote.²

1.1 TOPIC AND PURPOSE

The focus of this study is to determine if a significant relationship exists between economic indicators, namely income, change in income (between the 2011 and 2016 censuses) and unemployment, and the level of electoral support for One Nation in

Queensland. For this purpose, census data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics is used in conjunction with election results from the 2016 federal election and the 2017 state election in Queensland, so that minor party voting can be considered in two distinct political contexts. The federal study focuses on results for the Senate, as One Nation only stood candidates in 15 of the 150 seats for the House of Representatives.³

Central to this project is the reward-punishment model of voting behaviour, in which voters either reward incumbent governments through re-election for good economic management or punish them if their performance has been poor. This outlook on voter behaviour was exemplified by the appeal of Ronald Reagan to US voters during the 1980 presidential campaign:

Are you better off than you were four years ago? Is it easier for you to go and buy things from the store than it was four years ago? Is there more or less unemployment in the country than there was four years ago? Is America as respected throughout the world as it was?⁴

The reward-punishment model, which originated in the US context, is usually understood in terms of two-party competition. However, the ongoing decline in support for the major parties suggests voters are increasingly seeking out minor parties to “punish” the major parties collectively for economic policies pursued by both. In the Australian context, such voters often appear to favour party leaders with a high regional profile, contributing to a fragmentation of the minor party vote.

According to Hellwig and McAllister, economic voting effects have historically been modest in Australia, due to factors including three-year election cycles, compulsory voting, and a tendency not to assign responsibility for economic outcomes to the federal government.⁵ Due to this weakness, studies of voter behaviour in Australia have tended to emphasise long-term factors in vote choice, so that only

---

limited impact has been attributed to assessments of current economic conditions. However, Leigh and Wolfers argue that more recent research using econometric models has found stronger evidence for links between economic conditions and electoral outcomes, with the models providing “useful forecasts, particularly when making medium-term predictions.” This possibility challenges the existing view that the impact of economic voting is relatively weak in Australia.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the developments just noted, the following research problem has been identified: The Australian political science literature has yet to account for the potential of local economic circumstances to explain surges in support for minor parties. The research questions for the thesis are as follows:

1. Can economic voting explain the motivations for right-wing minor party voting in Australia?
2. Are economic motivations better explained by absolute measures of economic well-being or change in economic status?
3. How does economic voting intersect with other voting factors?

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE

This project is significant because it contributes to the study of economic voting at a time of observable change in Australian voting behaviour. While there have been studies conducted into economic voting, it has not been discussed extensively in relation to minor party voters. With the election of One Nation Senators at the 2016 federal election, it is important to contextualise whether the party’s revival was based partly on economic grounds or entirely on cultural anxiety. A focus on One Nation’s performance in 2016, as well as at the 2017 state election in Queensland, may produce findings relevant to the general study of minor party voting, a factor of growing importance in Australia.

---

1.4 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section provides a thematic and integrative review of three strands of literature relevant to this thesis. The first of these is international research into economic voting, mostly from US sources. Here an emphasis is placed on the reward-punishment model, which forms the theoretical framework of this study. The second is Australian literature on economic voting, which is considered more broadly. The third is minor party voting in Australia, and the new importance it has gained since the 2016 federal election.

1.4.2 Minor party voting in Australia

The surge in minor party voting reached historic heights at the 2016 election. One Nation has been one of the few minor parties to have had success across multiple decades.

This rise in support for an ideologically diverse range of minor parties reflects a significant change in voter behaviour. Prior to the 1970s, successful minor parties tended to be formed by breaking away from the existing major parties. The most important example was the Democratic Labour Party, which was formed as an anti-communist party in the wake of the Labor split of 1955. On the other side of politics, the Liberal Movement broke away from the Liberal Party in the early 1970s. It went on to play a role in the foundation of the Australian Democrats, which was established by Don Chipp, a former Liberal Party federal minister.7

Minor parties seeking to establish themselves from outside the existing major system faced considerable obstacles. The single-member electorate system made it difficult for new parties to compete with the major parties in the House of Representatives, despite the possibilities offered by preferential voting. The Senate offered minor parties better prospects after the PR-STV system was introduced in 1949, but was nonetheless largely dominated by the major parties until the 1980s.8

This began to change with the growth of “issue-based” minor parties on the left and right. This included the Australian Democrats, notwithstanding its roots in the Liberal Party, along with the Nuclear Disarmament Party and later the Greens.9

There is also the concept of post-materialism, which relates to issues concerning quality of life that are not monetary, such as the environment and human rights,10 implying that economic assessments play little role in determining electoral support for parties such as the Greens.

However, post-materialism does not explain the later emergence of parties of the right including One Nation, whose values are at odds with those of the post-materialists. This is reflected in their different electoral bases, with the Greens drawing much of their support from young voters in inner urban areas and One Nation drawing support largely from older voters in regional areas.11 According to the Australian Election Study for the 2019 federal election, 28% of voters aged 18-34 voted for the Greens and 9% voted for other minor parties including One Nation. By contrast, only 3% of those aged 55 and over voted for the Greens, with 11% voting for other minor parties.12

Other parties of the centre and the right that have won Senate representation have incorporated the name of a popular leader in their party name and drawn support from specific states or regional areas, namely the Nick Xenophon Team in South Australia, the Jacqui Lambie Network in Tasmania and Derryn Hinch’s Justice Party in Victoria. Another example is Katter’s Australia Party, associated with Bob Katter, the member for Queensland seat of Kennedy in the House of Representatives, which also holds seats in the Queensland state parliament.

While One Nation has achieved wider recognition and success than many of these parties, it remains notable for its strength in Queensland, where it won two Senate seats in 2016 compared with one each in New South Wales and Western

Australia and none in the other three states, or the two territories. While this reflects the fact that Queensland is home to the party’s founder, Pauline Hanson, Glenn Kefferd has argued that the state is fertile ground for anti-establishment and anti-major party sentiment generally, with an established record of support for minor parties and independents above the national average.\textsuperscript{13}

However, support for One Nation is not evenly distributed throughout Queensland, and research suggests the variation can at least partly be explained by economic factors. Goot and Watson studied the reasons people voted One Nation when the party first emerged in 1998, and noted the party drew much of its support from blue-collar voters in areas with higher unemployment than the national average, who held negative views about the state of the economy.\textsuperscript{14} Significantly, many One Nation voters believed neither the Liberal Party nor the Australian Labor Party had worked hard enough to tackle economic problems such as unemployment.\textsuperscript{15}

The influence of economic as opposed to cultural factors in explaining One Nation support has been widely debated. In an essay on Pauline Hanson entitled \textit{The White Queen}, David Marr argued One Nation voters were motivated mainly by cultural anxiety, particularly a perceived loss of status and fear of immigration.\textsuperscript{16} Similarly, a paper by Mols and Jetten argued that income was a poor predictor of the One Nation vote, given that One Nation had thrived even though economic conditions in Australia have been relatively good.\textsuperscript{17}

Despite this, Marr cited Australian Electoral Study survey data that suggested One Nation voters were more likely to feel pessimistic about the Australian economy and negative about their personal financial situation.\textsuperscript{18} The 2016 surge in support for the party has also been linked to economic problems in regional Queensland, where support for the party is strongest. These were noted in a report in \textit{The Monthly} after the 2019 federal election, which examined the impact of a mining downturn on the

\textsuperscript{15} Goot and Watson, 166.
\textsuperscript{18} Mols and Jetten, 96.
electorate of Dawson, covering the area of Mackay in the state’s north. The report said nearly one-third of adults had either no work or not enough, with many former miners selling cars and jet skis for quick money. Based on the previous research covered in this section of the literature review, there needs to be further investigation in modern minor party voting, particularly right-wing parties. Where there has been analysis on the rise of One Nation, the focus has been on the 1998 – 2001 period.

A previous study in the subject was conducted by Damon Alexander on the 1998 – 2001 era of One Nation. Alexander notes the party's demographic basis of support. These consistently found effects for race/immigration and rural location. Overall, he found that the aggregate level studies consistently found that electorates with local income and high unemployment had greater support for One Nation. This thesis aims to use a similar method of aggregate-based analysis to study the affiliation between economic factors and support for One Nation. However, Alexander also cited that “Aggregate-based studies, for example, have tended to accentuate the impact of socio-economic factors, such as income, class and unemployment. Whereas individual-level studies have often emphasised the role of attitudinal factors.” Given the 15-year absence between 2001 and 2016, the aim of this thesis is study whether more recent factors (at the time of the 2016 election) contributed to the return of One Nation, driving support from the outer metropolitan area, regional towns and rural areas.

1.4.3 International context: economic voting and elections

This section of the literature review refers to studies from the US. It is acknowledged that there are differences in the electoral system and political culture between the United States and Australia. While the US studies into economic voting were conducted within the context of its rigid two-party system, this thesis proposes that the principle of the reward-punishment model can be applied in the Australian context to explain the surge in support for minor parties including One Nation in 2016. The reward-punishment model assumes voters either reward or punish incumbents

---

21 Alexander, 233.
depending on the state of the economy.\textsuperscript{22} Beyond the United States literature, the model has been found to be of relevance to elections in Europe, with a study finding both economic growth and inequality had impacts on election results.\textsuperscript{23}

The US research into economic voting has drawn a distinction between “pocketbook” and “sociotropic” effects on voter behaviour. Pocketbook voting refers to vote choice based on assessment of the voter’s personal financial situation. Sociotropic voting is based on how the government is perceived to have managed the broader macroeconomic situation.\textsuperscript{24} While research has found support for both effects, the evidence for sociotropic voting appears stronger. This suggests economic voting effects are likely to be strongest where voters perceive a deterioration in their own communities, and thus to be evident by comparing regional economic data and election results.

The significance of sociotropic voting in the United States was established by results of the American National Election Studies surveys. According to Kiewiet and Lewis-Beck, this data showed voters were “strongly influenced by their assessments of how the nation’s economy had been performing”. Even if a voter’s own financial situation had deteriorated, they “tended to support the incumbent party when they believed that the US economy had been doing well.”\textsuperscript{25} A study by Robert Grafstein explored the “puzzle of weak pocketbook voting,” and found sociotropic assessments had more influence because they gave voters a better guide for long-term partisanship.\textsuperscript{26}

Studies that have found a role for pocketbook voting have tended to do so without downplaying the importance of sociotropic factors. A study by Healy, Persson and Snowberg found pocketbook evaluations contained “real information about

\textsuperscript{24} Bryan J. Dettrey, “Relative Losses and Economic Voting: Sociotropic Considerations or ‘Keeping up with the Joneses?’,” \textit{Politics & Policy} 41, no. 5 (2013): 789.
economic experiences,” concluding that “voters who appear in survey data to be voting based on the national economy are, in fact, voting equally on the basis of their personal financial conditions.” This provides further support for the contention that economic voting effects are likely to be strongest in communities where the economy has performed poorly.

1.4.2 Australian context: economic voting

The political science literature in Australia has traditionally attributed limited impact to economic voting, whether pocketbook or sociotropic. Discussing Australian research into voter behaviour up to 2013, Hellwig and McAllister describe the apparent weakness of economic effects in Australia as “a paradox in international research on economic voting”:

On the one hand, it is an established democracy with stable institutions, a two-party system and a sophisticated electorate. For these reasons, the comparative politics literature would predict a strong and robust economics-election connection for Australia.  

Hellwig and McAllister offered three sets of explanations for the seemingly limited effect of economic conditions on election outcomes in Australia. The first were institutional factors including a three-year electoral cycle, which could lead voters to think government policies had not had time to take effect, and compulsory voting, which meant those who had not made detailed evaluations of the government’s economic performance were nonetheless required to vote. The second set relates to party identification, which is unusually strong in Australia, and has been shown to have an inverse relationship with economic voting. The third set involves assignment of responsibility for policy outcomes. Voters in Australia may not hold the federal government responsible for the state of the economy, due to “Australia’s relatively small size, and interdependence with the global economy.”

---

30 Hellwig and McAllister, 238.
Researchers into voter behaviour in Australia accordingly emphasised the party identification model, which proposes that voters form attachments to a major political party early in life. The voter only goes against their party of identification in exceptional circumstances, and usually returns to it at the following election. This model was used to explain the stability that was evident in early studies of voter behaviour in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s.\textsuperscript{31}

The importance of party identification was reiterated by Ian McAllister in his 2011 book, \textit{The Australian Voter: 50 Years of Change}, which analysed voter behaviour using variables including education levels, union membership and religion. While McAllister argued that parental socialisation effects had somewhat declined, he affirmed that long-term voting trends still showed a “remarkably high degree of stability.”\textsuperscript{32} However, the rise of minor party voting over the three federal elections since the book’s publication has called into question this stability and the relevance of the party identification model. The gaps identified in this literature review point to the need for closer analysis around economic voting for right-wing minor parties in Australia.

\section*{1.5 METHODS AND METHODOLOGY}

To consider the research questions of this thesis, it is necessary to examine the relationship between economic factors and voter support for One Nation. A dataset has been produced containing Australian Bureau of Statistics census data from 2011 and 2016 and election results at the polling booth level, derived from the Australian Electoral Commission and the Electoral Commission of Queensland. These are matched by using census data from the Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1) in which the polling booths are located.\textsuperscript{33}

Linear regression analysis is used to measure the relationship between One Nation’s share of the vote – the dependent variable – and independent variables relevant to the study of economic voting effects. This produces coefficients which, if

\textsuperscript{31} Angus Campbell et al., \textit{The American Voter} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).
\textsuperscript{32} Ian McAllister, \textit{The Australian Voter: 50 Years of Change} (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2011): 49.
\textsuperscript{33} I am indebted to the election analyst, William Bowe, for providing me with the polling place data matched to the local census results.
significant, allow for estimation of the One Nation vote based on the value of the independent variables.

The variables used are:

- **Dependent variable:** percentage vote for One Nation at the 2016 federal election for the Senate, and the 2017 state election in Queensland;
- **Economic variables (independent):** income, unemployment, change in income between 2011 and 2016;
- **Non-economic variables (independent):** English spoken only and percentage of Indigenous population;
- **Dummy variables (independent):** State variables (for federal election analysis only) and metropolitan/regional variable (for both federal and state elections).

The inclusion of an English language variable allows for measurement of the clear tendency for One Nation to receive their strongest support from voters of Anglo-Celtic origin, in recognition of the fact that economic factors can offer only a partial explanation for the party’s overall support. A variable for the Indigenous population was also included after it was noted that One Nation achieved minimal support in low-income Indigenous communities. The dummy variables allow for measurement of effects at state level, such as the strong support for the party in Queensland. Similarly, the metropolitan/regional variable provides a measure of the tendency for the party to receive more votes in regional areas. These serve as control variables, so that the coefficients measure the effects of the economic variables independently of the other factors included in the model.

1.6 **LIMITATIONS**

Survey data is an ideal source for investigating individual voting behaviour. However, existing sources of data such as the Australian Election Study series provide only very small samples of respondents who voted for One Nation, and large-scale independent interviews are not feasible for a Masters project. The study is thus based on election and census data from the lowest level for which data is available: election results at the polling place level, and census data from Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1),
which the Australian Bureau of Statistics uses to combine areas of around 400 residents. While care must still be taken in drawing inferences about individual behaviour, a study at this level provides a strong basis for considering the research questions central to this thesis.

In focusing on One Nation, the study also offers only a limited perspective on the rise of minor party voting. This is relevant not only to “post-materialist” parties such as the Greens, but also to arguably populist parties such as the Nick Xenophon Team, Jacqui Lambie Network and Derryn Hinch’s Justice Party. These parties have achieved Senate representation in the past decade but have not had the anti-immigration focus of One Nation.

A further limitation is that the project does not examine every aspect that motivates people to vote for minor parties, as the focus is on economic factors. Chapter two of this study examines non-economic reasons for voting for One Nation, but the statistical analysis of them is limited to control variables for linguistic factors, the Indigenous population and state and regional factors.

1.7 THESIS CHAPTERS

Chapter one focuses on the different reasons people may vote for minor parties in the Australian context. Those examined include protest voting, cultural anxiety, ideology and charismatic leadership.

Chapter two examines the initial rise of One Nation, particularly at the 1998 Queensland state election, to provide context for the main case study focusing on the party’s return to prominence at the 2016 federal and 2017 Queensland state elections.

The third chapter examines different models of voting behaviour with an emphasis on economic voting, including consideration of the distinction between pocketbook and sociotropic effects. However, relevant alternative models of voting behaviour, including party identification and class voting, are also addressed.

---

https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1270.0.55.001~July%202016~Main%20Features~Statistical%20Area%20Level%201%20(SA1)~10013.
Chapter four analyses election and census data using linear regression to establish whether economic voting was a statistically significant factor in support for One Nation.

The fifth chapter integrates the findings of the research into the literature on economic voting and minor party voting in Australia. This includes an examination of the key findings, acknowledgement of the limitations of this study and recommendations for further research.

1.8 CONCLUSION

Based on the above literature review, the 2016 election results provide an opportunity to reconsider the impact of economic voting in Australia. Although past research has indicated economic voting to be of limited value in explaining voter behaviour in Australia due to strong partisanship and the overall good health of the Australian economy, it is necessary to revisit these findings considering the unprecedented growth in minor party voting over the past decade. The results of this research will also offer valuable insights into the extent to which populist politics in Australia can be best understood in terms of economic or cultural factors.
Chapter One: Minor Party Voting in Australia

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this thesis reviews potential reasons for minor party voting, including protest voting against the two-party system, adherence to ideologies outside the political mainstream, support for charismatic leaders and – significantly for the economic voting thesis – issues of local concern. In Australia, the rise in minor party voting since 2010 has been especially important in the Senate, where a proportional representation electoral system gives minor parties greater opportunities than the House of Representatives to win seats. This has occurred at a time of instability in the major parties, which have experienced frequent leadership challenges and changes of prime ministership.¹

Figure 1: Rise in minor party voting in Senate, 2004-2019


2.1 THE RISE OF MINOR PARTY VOTING IN THE SENATE

The increase in minor party voting at Australian Senate elections is illustrated in Figure 1, which includes a combined result for parties other than the Coalition, Labor and the Greens. This records a peak in 2016, followed by a slight fall in 2019. The rise in minor party voting has taken different forms in different states, as illustrated by Table 1, which records each case of a minor party’s Senate vote exceeding 4% in each state since 2013. While One Nation and the Palmer United Party achieved success across multiple states, both recorded their greatest support in Queensland. Other parties in the table, notably the Nick Xenophon Group, Derryn Hinch’s Justice Party and Jacqui Lambie Network, recorded significant levels of support only in their home states.

Table 1: Minor party primary votes 2013-2019 (Senate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Senate Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Democrats</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Xenophon Group</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmer United Party</td>
<td>Tas</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmer United Party</td>
<td>Qld</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmer United Party</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derryn Hinch’s Justice Party</td>
<td>Vic</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Nation</td>
<td>Qld</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Nation</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Xenophon Team</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqui Lambie Network</td>
<td>Tas</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Nation</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Nation</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Nation</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqui Lambie Network</td>
<td>Tas</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 THEORIES OF MINOR PARTY VOTING

The rise in support for minor parties in Australia has been reflected by survey data showing weakening identification with the major parties. According to McAllister and Muller, around 80% of voters identified with a major party in the 1960s. In the early 2010s, that figure declined to 70%, and in 2016 only 63% identified with a major party.2

---

Further, lifetime voting for the same party had declined from 72% in 1967 to 40% in 2016.\(^3\)

In common with similar countries with single-member electoral systems, elections in Australia have been dominated by large parties. The concept of “Duverger’s law” proposes that voters in such systems are unlikely to waste their votes on minor party candidates due to the improbability of them winning. As Denemark and Bowler observe, “due to the low likelihood of electoral success for minor party candidates, voters tend not to cast minor party votes unless they are dissatisfied with both major party alternatives.”\(^4\) This principle is complicated in Australia by preferential voting and proportional representation in the Senate, which ensure minor party votes are not wasted. Nonetheless, politics in Australia continues to be seen by voters and the media largely as a contest of two parties.

Conversely, Australia’s system of compulsory voting may present opportunities for minor parties. Ordinarily, voters who feel dissatisfied with the state of politics abstain from voting altogether. However, voters who are compelled to turn out may instead express their dissatisfaction by lodging blank or invalid votes or voting for a minor party.\(^5\) In arguing for the abolition of compulsory voting, former Liberal Senator Nick Minchin claimed it was undemocratic and fostered the growth of minor parties.\(^6\) As cited by Bennett, Minchin said in a 2001 press conference (at a time when One Nation was seen to be impacting Coalition votes) that compulsory voting was “aiding and abetting One Nation-style destructive politics.”\(^7\)

Historically, successful minor parties in Australia were typically assumed centrist parties. These parties were able to gain support from “protest” voters disaffected from the major parties.\(^8\) Van der Brug and Fennema defined protest voting

\(^3\) McAllister and Muller, “ELECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SENATE,” 152.
\(^7\) Bennett, 21.
\(^8\) Denemarck and Bowler, “MINOR PARTIES AND PROTEST VOTES IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.” 48-9.
as “a vote primarily cast to scare the elite that is not policy-driven.” However, successful minor parties have emerged in recent decades at both ends of the ideological spectrum, namely the Greens on the left and One Nation on the right.

Jiang and Ma argue that declining trust in government can encourage protest voting for anti-establishment, unorthodox or ideologically extreme parties, particularly on the right. Their study of the 2016 federal election found that this distrust was partly related to a view that the economy had deteriorated over the previous two decades and a lack of confidence in either major party to address the situation. This was consistent with the earlier findings of Denemark and Bowler that support for One Nation was linked to economic evaluations, consistent with the reward-punishment model of economic voting.

The connection between economic factors and populist voting in Australia has been complicated by the strength of the economy. A report from the University of Canberra and the Museum of Australian Democracy noted the relatively mild effects of the global financial crisis of 2007-2008 in Australia and found the rise in dissatisfaction with democracy had come at a time of economic growth or prosperity. However, the picture of economic good health in Australia has been complicated by regional weaknesses that are potentially associated with electoral support for Pauline Hanson in regional Queensland, Nick Xenophon in South Australia and Jacqui Lambie in Tasmania. The third chapter of this thesis will further examine economic regionalism, such as the impact of a downturn in the mining industry in areas where One Nation has achieved strong support.

---


10 Denemark and Bowler, “Minor Parties and Protest Votes in Australia and New Zealand,” 49.


12 Jiang and Ma, 373.


2.3 MISTRUST IN DEMOCRACY

Declining trust in the political system in Australia and other liberal democracies has been associated with the phenomenon of populism, which Ernesto Laclau identifies with a perceived division between “the people” and a dominant elite.15 This has been reflected in Australia in poor assessment of political parties and growing dissatisfaction with political leadership. These issues have contributed to reduced party identification and greater electoral volatility.16

There is evidence that lack of trust in democracy has become more pronounced in Australia over the past decade. Survey data from 2016 showed the percentage of respondents who were satisfied with democracy in Australia was at just 42%, compared with 71% three years earlier.17 This reflects research across western democracies showing a perception that major parties collectively represent an elite out of touch with common concerns. Weakening trust in democracy has seen support increase not only for populist causes but even for authoritarian, military and “strongman” type leaders.

Populist ideologies typically follow the notion that the common people are virtuous in their wisdom and that simple solutions solve complex problems.18 Rodney Tiffen notes that populist parties identify a common enemy against the “ordinary people” and are typically centred around a strong leader whose ideas shape the platform of the party.

In Australia, research shows political cynicism to be a common theme among disaffected voters. A survey by the Grattan Institute found many respondents thought governments only looked after themselves or a few elite interests, and that politicians did not empathise with ordinary voters or understand what they thought. Judith Brett observed that 13.5% of federal parliamentarians in 1901 had been tradesmen, which fell to 1.2% by 1996. According to research from Fairfax in 2017, nearly 50 per cent of

17 Mark Evans, Max Halupka, and Gerry Stoker, How Australians Imagine Their Democracy: The Power of Us.
Liberal parliamentarians were either former political staffers, party officials or government advisors.19 For Labor, 55% of its caucus had worked as political staffers, while 40% had worked within the union movement.20 By contrast, many voters found Pauline Hanson appealing because she was a small business owner and single mother.

Decline in trust in democracy in Australia has been further encouraged by the political circumstances prior to 2016, such as frequent changes in political leadership. Over that time, changes of prime ministership have occurred with the replacement of Kevin Rudd by Julia Gillard in 2010; the return of Kevin Rudd in 2013; the Coalition’s election victory under Tony Abbott in 2013; the replacement of Abbott by Malcolm Turnbull in 2015; and again with the replacement of Turnbull by Scott Morrison in 2018.21 Cameron and McAllister argue that the frequency of leadership changes has been reflected in a decline in trust in politicians recorded by the Australian Election Study series between 2010 and 2016.22 A 2021 study by McAllister and Dassonneville showed that leadership trust declined as leadership changed. Previously, leadership trust was cyclical. New leaders often inspired hope and optimism; however, this has declined since 2013.23

Another factor that may have contributed to the appeal of minor parties is that both major parties have regularly broken promises while in government. While this has a long history in Australia, there were significant examples that immediately preceded the survey period. Before the 2010 election, Prime Minister Julia Gillard ruled out introducing a carbon tax in 2010 but went on to do so after forming a minority government with the support of the Greens.24 Subsequently, then Opposition Leader Tony Abbott stood in front of a billboard before the 2013 election stating there would be “no cuts to education, health, pensions, changes to the GST, no cuts to ABC and

20 McIlroy.
21 Tiffen, Disposable Leaders, 1-3.
22 Cameron and McAllister, “Trust, Parties and Leaders.”
“SBS” under a Coalition government. These promises were not kept, exacerbating low opinions which the public held about governments and oppositions.25

A survey conducted in 2016 and 2017 by the University of Canberra and the Australian Museum of Democracy recorded a widespread concern that politicians were not held accountable for broken promises, and a belief that the major parties were too similar. Protest and minor parties benefit in such circumstances, as voters who are dissatisfied with the system are more likely to express their discontent by turning away from the main parties, rather than switching support from one to the other.26

2.4 CULTURAL ANXIETY AND IDEOLOGY

According to the Grattan Institute, a further influence for minor populist party voting is “cultural anxiety”, which encompasses concerns about immigration, a perceived loss of traditional cultural identity in western countries, and a sense among workers of declining economic and social status. Such anxieties create perceptions that the common voter has been left behind, particularly if they perceive their own group to have once had more power.27

Much of the cultural anxiety associated with populist politics has been explained in terms of hostility towards pro-immigration policies favoured by established candidates and parties. A poll from Essential Research in 2016 showed that 52% supported the idea that Australia should be more like it was in the past.28 A study by the Grattan Institute found those who voted for right-wing minor parties, such as One Nation and Australian Conservatives, were more likely to experience cultural anxiety and have more negative views about the future of Australia. These voters usually

placed greater emphasis on the “Australian way of life”. This notion was more likely to resonate with voters from regional parts of Australia.\textsuperscript{29}

In the Australian context, David McKnight argues that the common thread among populist parties is a view that both Liberal and Labor have done little to offer a coherent alternative to neoliberal policies. A study by Mols and Jetten has shown that populist parties of the right can thrive both in times of economic decline and prosperity. During periods of economic decline, populists tend to use immigration as a scapegoat because new migrants can be perceived as competitors in a weak labour market.\textsuperscript{30} This contributed to the success of One Nation at the 1998 election when they secured 8.4% of the national vote.

2.5 CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

Charismatic personalities, particularly those who present themselves as outsiders against the supposed political elite, have been central to the rise of populist politics. Kathryn Crosby notes that populist parties in Australia have built their support directly around the appeal of their leading personalities, including Clive Palmer of the Palmer United Party and United Australia Party, Bob Katter of Katter’s Australian Party and Jacqui Lambie of the Jacqui Lambie Network, in addition to Pauline Hanson of One Nation.\textsuperscript{31}

This has not been limited to populist parties of the right. Nick Xenophon has achieved electoral success in South Australia with his party, the Nick Xenophon Team (subsequently named the Centre Alliance), which won three Senate seats at the 2016 election.\textsuperscript{32} Another party built around a popular public figure to achieve parliamentary representation has been Derryn Hinch’s Justice Party. Hinch won a Senate seat in Victoria at the 2016 election, and the party won a further three seats in the Victorian Legislative Council in 2018.

\textsuperscript{29} Grattan Institute, “A Crisis of Trust”.
\textsuperscript{32} Kathryn Crosby, \textit{Populist, Populism or Personality?: What Is Actually Gaining in Support and How to Test It}, 18.
Pauline Hanson’s appeal has been built on her image as an unpolished political “outsider” who has challenged the interests of the ruling elite.33 Clive Palmer, who won a seat in the House of Representatives in 2013 while three of his party’s candidates were elected to the Senate, had a celebrity approach to campaigning, presenting himself as a regular Australian despite his status as a wealthy businessman.34

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter identifies many reasons why voters might be turning towards minor parties generally, and populist parties. Successful minor parties in Australia traditionally formed by breaking away from one of the major parties and drew much of their support from voters making a short-term protest their usual party of identification. While voters sometimes supported these parties due to their attraction to a charismatic leader, they may equally have done so on protest grounds or for ideological reasons.

However, the recent rise in minor party voting has been driven by parties that have been distinctively of the left or right, many of which have been built around a popular leader after whom the party is named, such as Pauline Hanson’s One Nation. This has been a distinct new development related to declining identification with the major political parties and growing mistrust in political leaders and democracy in general. These trends have been encouraged by frequent leadership changes in the major parties, broken election promises and a perception that leaders only look after themselves or a select few.

Other explanations for declining trust and rising minor party support have included a lack of confidence in both parties to address economic concerns, due to their shared responsibility for neoliberal economic policies. Those who are more inclined to support a minor party based on ideological reasons, particularly a populist party of the right, may express views that are based around cultural anxiety and aggressive nationalism. These factors arise where there is fear based around perceived outsiders, be they cultural elites or immigrants, contributing to an “us and them” attitude.

34 Kathryn Crosby, “Populist, Populism or Personality?,” 24.
The next chapter maps the rise, fall and second rise of One Nation, and considers how the party fits into the explanations for minor party voting that have been considered in this chapter.
Chapter Two: The Emergence of One Nation

3.0 INTRODUCTION

One Nation is the most successful minor party of the right to have emerged in Australia’s recent history. The party was founded after Pauline Hanson's election to the House of Representatives seat of Oxley in 1996 and reached its electoral peak when it won 11 seats in the Queensland parliament in 1998.

In this first phase of success, One Nation hoped to establish a lasting challenge to the major parties in the lower houses of federal and state parliaments. Minor parties in Australia had traditionally been restricted to the federal and state upper houses, which are mostly elected by proportional representation, and excluded by the majoritarian electoral systems of the lower houses. This reality was acknowledged by Don Chipp, founder of the Australian Democrats party, when he said the party’s objective was to use its position in the Senate to “keep the bastards honest”. One Nation had a more ambitious strategy, with Hanson saying she was “not there to keep the bastards honest”, but to “get rid of the bastards”.¹

However, the early successes were followed by a long period of electoral failure and disarray that lasted until the double dissolution election of 2016, when Hanson and three other One Nation candidates were elected to the Senate. The party has since re-established itself as a conventional upper house minor party, without repeating the feat of its 1998 result in Queensland. As of the start of 2021, the party has two Senators in the Commonwealth parliament and representatives in the Queensland lower house and the upper houses of Western Australia and New South Wales.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the first emergence of One Nation, with a focus on why people voted for them. This chapter is predominantly focused on the earlier period of One Nation success, which was the subject of a large body of research. The thesis will then build upon this by examining the pattern of the party’s support at the 2016 election in chapter five. This chapter will focus on the party’s

performance in its strongest state, Queensland, with some comparisons to New South Wales and Western Australia, where One Nation has also won seats in both federal and state parliaments.


Pauline Hanson is a former proprietor of a fish and chip shop who was elected to federal parliament in 1996 in the seat of Oxley in outer Brisbane, a once safe Labor seat where she had initially been endorsed as the Liberal candidate. Hanson came to national attention during the election campaign after criticising the government for providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with financial privileges which were unavailable to white Australians. This led to her being disendorsed by the Liberal Party, although she remained identified as the Liberal candidate on the ballot paper. Hanson went on to win the seat with 48.6% of the vote, defeating Labor member Les Scott with a 19.3% swing.

Amid national media attention following her campaign and shock election win, Hanson established her own political party, Pauline Hanson’s One Nation, together with David Oldfield and David Ettridge. Hanson’s “anti-politician” persona and political views resonated with many voters who felt negatively impacted by the evolving socio-economic situation in Australia. Some supporters who said they did not necessarily agree with all her views said they admired her determination. Hanson was seen as a champion of traditional values and cultural nostalgia. She was nonetheless tolerant towards “homosexuality and abortion”, although these views appeared to be at odds with those of many of her supporters.

---

3 Deutchman and Ellison, 33-34.
However, most of the media attention Hanson attracted related to race and immigration. In her 1996 maiden speech, Hanson said: “I and most Australians want our immigration policy radically reviewed and that of multiculturalism abolished. I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians.” She continued to criticise government programs that assisted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, saying existing policies were “encouraging separatism in Australia by providing opportunities, land, moneys and facilities available only to Aboriginals.”

Opinion polls showed Hanson’s new party was eroding the Coalition’s support base. Despite Hanson’s inflammatory comments, the Liberal Prime Minister, John Howard, appeared reluctant to address her views publicly. It was not until May 1997 that Howard said Hanson was “wrong by saying Australia is at risk of being swamped by Asians, she is wrong to seek scapegoats for society’s problems.” Former diplomat Phillip Flood said this was “an excellent statement but seven months too late.”

### 3.2 ONE NATION’S FIRST PERIOD OF ELECTORAL SUCCESS: 1998-2001

The formation of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation was followed by a three-year period in which the party won seats at two federal elections and state elections in Queensland, Western Australia and New South Wales. The most remarkable success for the party was when it won 11 seats at the Queensland state election in June 1998. Then as now, there was argument as to whether the party’s support was purely cultural, and a reaction against multiculturalism, or whether it reflected economic phenomena such as the decline of manufacturing.

---


8 Hanson.


3.2.1 Queensland 1998 State Election

One Nation recorded 22.68% of the vote in Queensland at the 1998 state election despite not having fielded candidates in nine of the 89 seats, gaining six seats from Labor and five from the Nationals. However, Labor largely compensated for these losses by winning five seats from the Liberal Party, which lost almost a quarter of its vote from 1995.\textsuperscript{11} Most of these gains were in Brisbane, reflecting relatively weak support for One Nation in major cities. The party’s support was instead drawn from areas with mostly white populations in the outer suburbs, regional towns and rural areas.

Table 2: Top 20 seats for One Nation support (primary and two-party preferred) at Queensland state election, June 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>2PP</th>
<th>Second Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barambah*</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
<td>Nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryborough*</td>
<td>Regional City</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablelands*</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>Nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ipswich</td>
<td>Outer Urban</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
<td>Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crows Nest</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>Nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockyer*</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td>Nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gympie</td>
<td>Regional City</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>Nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ipswich West*</td>
<td>Outer Urban</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
<td>Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callide</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>Nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnett</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>Nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thuringowa*</td>
<td>Regional City</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Downs</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>Nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundamba*</td>
<td>Outer Urban</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hervey Bay*</td>
<td>Regional City</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdekin*</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
<td>Nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cunningham</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>Nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulgrave*</td>
<td>Regional City</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>Labor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Primary Vote</th>
<th>2PP Vote</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whitsunday*</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>Nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>Nationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caboolture*</td>
<td>Outer Urban</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>Labor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Seat won by One Nation. Source: Electoral Commission of Queensland

Table 2 illustrates where One Nation enjoyed its strongest support by listing the 20 electorates in which its primary vote was highest. This includes the 11 seats won by the party, in some cases (such as Caboolture and Whitsunday) because they received enough preferences to win despite recording lower primary vote shares than in other seats where they were unsuccessful (notably Ipswich, Crows Nest and Gympie). The table shows both the primary and two-party preferred vote for One Nation, with a result of over 50% in the latter indicating that they won the seat.

The table shows that One Nation was successful in obtaining votes from the Nationals’ heartland, where it gained the seats of Tablelands, Lockyer and Burdekin. The question of country voters having a distinctive voice in Australian politics has a long history, dating as far back as the formation of the Country Party in 1920. Many country voters have felt forgotten by the major parties, contributing to the increasing prevalence of distrust towards politicians. According to a study by Jennifer Curtin for the Australian Parliamentary Library, people from rural areas were twice as likely as others to vote for One Nation. Furthermore, they were more likely to express dissatisfaction with the state of democracy.

However, One Nation also won seats in outer metropolitan and regional areas, reflecting their appeal to white working-class voters in areas that had traditionally been strong for Labor. Two of the seats won by One Nation in the 1998 Queensland Election, Caboolture and Ipswich West, were traditionally Labor-held seats located in outer Brisbane. According to the 2001 census, 80.1% of residents of the Caboolture local government area were born in Australia, while only 72.6% of people across the nation were born in Australia. Caboolture also had more people employed in blue-collar jobs than the Australian average, with 7.4% of residents employed as tradespeople compared with 6.9% nationally. Further, 6.1% were employed as tradespeople.

---


13 Curtin, 18.
labourers compared to 4.8% across Australia as a whole. The Ipswich West electorate had similar characteristics to Caboolture: 84.5% were born in Australia, and there were higher rates of employment in blue-collar occupations than the Australian average. In Ipswich West, 9.5% of people were employed as tradespeople and 7.0% were labourers.

### 3.2.2 1998 Federal Election

The 1998 federal election was held on October 3, a few months after the Queensland state election in June. One Nation ran candidates in most House of Representatives electorates and for every state and territory in the Senate. In 1997, an electoral redistribution in Queensland resulted in much of Hanson’s seat of Oxley being transferred to the new seat of Blair. Hanson ran in Blair, which covered the western part of her former electorate.\(^{14}\) In doing so she spurned the safer option of the Senate, where proportional presentation increases the likelihood of a minor party or independent winning a seat.\(^{15}\) However, One Nation’s success at the state election was not repeated at the federal election, which was largely caused by preference recommendations on the major parties’ how-to-vote cards.

The Queensland election promoted concern within the Howard government over the impact of One Nation and debate over how it should respond. The former Queensland state Nationals leader, Rob Borbidge, believed Hanson’s party would hold the balance of power and effectively annihilate the Nationals at a federal level. Media commentary at the time suggested One Nation could win as many as 15 seats in the House of Representatives as well as seats in the Senate.\(^ {16}\)

The focus of the debate was where to place One Nation on Liberal and National Party how-to-vote cards. As reflected in *The Howard Years* documentary, the topic of preferences was sensitive for the Liberal Party. John Howard was unwilling to condemn Hanson, believing she and her party would disappear if he ignored her. However, other Liberal MPs such as Peter Costello, Alexander Downer and

---

Christopher Pyne were more critical, and advocated joining Labor in directing preferences against the party.\footnote{Australian Broadcasting Corporation, \textit{The Howard Years}. Video, 17:20.}

This view was opposed by conservative Liberal Party MPs including Tony Abbott, who pointed to the advantages of a preference deal with One Nation, arguing their preferences had saved three Coalition seats from Labor at the state election.\footnote{Rae Wear “Political Chronicle: July to December 1998,” 254.} Two Nationals MPs from Queensland, Bob Katter and De-Anne Kelly, expressed concerned about the safety of their seats. Both sided with One Nation on various policy stances, such as being opposed to the privatisation of Telstra and the introduction of a goods and services tax.\footnote{Wear, 255–257.}

In the event, the Liberals directed preferences against One Nation in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, and the Nationals did so in all but six seats, including four in Queensland and two in New South Wales.\footnote{Wear, 356.} Largely for this reason, One Nation performed poorly at the election in terms of seats. The only seat won was for the Senate in Queensland, and Hanson lost the newly created seat of Blair to the Liberal candidate, Cameron Thompson.\footnote{Michael Leach, Geoffrey Stokes, and Ian Ward, \textit{The Rise and Fall of One Nation} (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2000): 69.} Nonetheless, the party recorded 8.4\% of the national vote in the House of Representatives and 9.0\% in the Senate, the best result by a minor party in terms of vote share since 1990.

The combination of cultural, economic and geographic factors observed by Henry Reynolds at the Queensland state election was again evident in the federal result.\footnote{Paul L. Reynolds, “Hanson and Queensland’s Political Culture,” in Two Nations: The Causes and Effects of the Rise of the One Nation Party in Australia, ed. Robert Manne (Melbourne: Bookman, 1998): 147.} One Nation again attracted its strongest support in Queensland, particularly in regional Queensland, and polled weakest in the inner areas of the major cities.

3.2.3 Sources of One Nation support

Prior to the 1998 federal election, Hanson focused her campaign on rural workers, primary producers and small business owners, particularly those who had been impacted by overseas competition. Gibson, McAllister and Swenson found that One Nation supporters tended to be male and employed in blue-collar or working-
class occupations. One Nation also had stronger appeal in regional and rural areas compared to the cities.\(^\text{23}\) A subsequent study of voters in Queensland similarly found that supporters of new conservative movements were predominantly male, older and working class, while opponents had higher formal education.\(^\text{24}\)

Evidently, some of the support for One Nation was cultural rather than economic. Davis and Stimson also found that some cases were cultural, in that the party was more likely to be popular in areas where there were less Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and multicultural populations.\(^\text{25}\) Many voters in Queensland had concerns about native title, reflecting opposition to the Mabo and Wik judgements among many voters in rural and regional communities.\(^\text{26}\) Ahluwalia and McCarthy argued that resentment against a multicultural Australia had led to a cohort of voters who had traditionally been supportive of Labor becoming disillusioned with both major parties. Such voters reacted negatively to the previous Labor government’s focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and a foreign policy that emphasised the Asian Pacific region.

The contention that One Nation supporters tended to be white, older, working-class men was supported by Clive Bean’s research using survey data from the Australian Election Study (AES) series.\(^\text{27}\) In the study, Hanson’s Heartland: Who’s for One Nation and Why, Murray Goot identified the characteristics that typically defined such voters: feelings of insecurity, inherent racism (a natural tendency towards a cultural identity) or “the black hole where political leadership and vision should be”.\(^\text{28}\) While Goot found age was not a distinctive factor in identifying One Nation support, a


contributor to the book *The Rise and Fall of One Nation* sourced data from the 1998 AES that found those aged 45 to 64 years were most likely to support One Nation, although support among voters 75 and older was not as strong.

A study by Marian Sawyer also found that Hanson appealed to white males who felt victimised by the Family Court, child support laws and feminism. Hanson had also said that Anglo-Saxon men were the most downtrodden people in Australia.29 Further, Hanson claimed that unemployed single women were having children to gain financial support from the government.30 A Morgan Gallup poll conducted prior to the Queensland State Election in June 1998 found 46% of respondents believed Hanson was “better than other politicians and knows what ordinary Aussies want” while 17% believed she would “protect jobs, limit foreign investment and oppose foreign aid”.31 A study by Davis and Stimson to identify the sources of One Nation support following the Queensland election found that One Nation tended to have higher support among unskilled workers in blue-collar industries, which eroded votes from the Labor Party.32

The defection of working-class Labor voters could be a reaction against the economic rationalism of the Hawke/Keating government. The Hawke/Keating government had been determined to establish itself as economically responsible, particularly after the Whitlam years, including through the privatisation of parts of the Commonwealth Bank, Qantas and Telstra.33 Hanson concentrated her campaigning efforts on socio-economic populism, which targeted rural workers, primary producers and small business owners who were feeling impacted by cheaper overseas competition.34

Alexander noted that the early successes of One Nation inspired a wave of both aggregate-level and survey-based studies investigating the effects of various demographic variables on the party’s support, including economic factors such as income and unemployment. The aggregate-level studies consistently found that electorates with low income and high unemployment had particularly strong support

30 Sawyer, 3.
31 Stimson and Davis, “Disillusionment and Disenchantment at the Fringe,” 72.
32 Stimson and Davis, 78.
for One Nation.\textsuperscript{35} Alexander’s own detailed aggregate-level study found several economic variables to be associated with support for One Nation, notably SEIFA (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas) values for advantage, economic resources and education. These measures were developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to rank geographic areas by subsets of census variables relevant to socio-economic advantage or disadvantage.\textsuperscript{36}

However, Alexander also noted distinctions between the two types of study, with individual-level studies tending instead to emphasise the role of attitudinal rather than economic factors. While a survey-based study by Bean also found an income effect, survey-based studies by Goot and Gibson et al. failed to find similar effects for unemployment.\textsuperscript{37} Nonetheless, the clear pattern of studies into One Nation support at these elections was that support for the party was strongest in economically challenged areas with low populations of non-English speaking migrants.

Aside from the fact of the party’s support being concentrated in Queensland, these patterns were reflected in strong support in regional and rural areas as well as the fringes of capital cities, which were characterised by relatively low incomes and housing prices and large numbers of unskilled workers.\textsuperscript{38} However, Alexander noted that support in rural and provincial areas was greater than economic factors alone could explain.\textsuperscript{39} This pointed to a degree of disconnect among country voters, particularly since decision making is often concentrated in the urban areas. The divide between the regions and the city had also been observed by Jennifer Curtin in her paper on \textit{The Voice and the Vote of the Bush}, which will be further discussed in the next chapter.


\textsuperscript{38} Stimson and Davis, “Disillusionment and Disenchantment at the Fringe.”78.

\textsuperscript{39} Alexander, “Pauline Hanson’s One Nation and the Far-Right Tradition in Australia,” 307-308.
Hanson promoted a vision that Australia needed to become more like it was in the 1950s: self-sufficient, united and ethnically homogenous.40 These sentiments reflected an anti-globalisation stance prompted by economic changes from the 1980s that opened Australia up to greater competition from overseas.

3.2.4 Declining fortunes: 1999-2001

Following the relative disappointment of the 1998 federal election result, One Nation again failed to repeat the high-water mark of its 1998 Queensland state election. However, the party did manage to win upper house seats at the subsequent state elections in New South Wales, Western Australia, and Queensland.

At the 1999 New South Wales election, One Nation won one seat in the Legislative Council after recording 6.3% of the vote.41 This seat was won by the party co-founder, David Oldfield. Compared to New South Wales, One Nation performed better at the state election in Western Australia in February 2001. Like the Queensland election, One Nation attracted strong support outside the metropolitan area, winning seats in each of the three non-metropolitan multi-member Legislative Council regions: Agricultural, Mining and Pastoral and South West. The party also contributed to the defeat of Richard Court’s Coalition government through its policy of directing preferences against sitting members.42

Between 1998 and 2001, all of One Nation’s 11 elected Members of Parliament in Queensland quit the party, either becoming independents or defecting to the new breakaway party, the City Country Alliance.43 At the Queensland election in February 2001, One Nation only secured three seats. This was reflected at the party’s performance in the federal election the following November, when its national Senate


### 3.3 THE WILDERNESS YEARS: 2001-2016

After the 2001 federal election, the decline of One Nation became more evident. This is illustrated in Table 3 and Figures 2 and 3, summarising One Nation’s electoral performance since 1998. This shows an evident collapse in the party’s fortunes starting from 2001.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the decline occurred nationally, with support for One Nation collapsing in each of the states where it won seats in either federal or state parliament.

Figure 3 shows the performance of One Nation over 21 years at state elections in Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia. For New South Wales and Western Australia, the graph uses upper house results as the best basis for comparing and analysing state-wide support, since One Nation has rarely contested all lower house seats. The latter factor explains the minuscule results recorded for One Nation in Queensland at the 2009 and 2012 state elections, at which it contested only a handful of seats. However, One Nation has consistently run candidates in Queensland state elections. Similarly, One Nation did not always run a candidate in every region in the Legislative Council in Western Australia.

\textit{Table 3: Seats won by One Nation at federal and state elections, 1998-2001}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>State Election Years (Seats Won)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queensland (Legislative Assembly)</td>
<td>1998 (11), 2001 (3), 2004 (1), 2006 (1), 2009 (0), 2012 (0), 2015 (0), 2017 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales (Legislative Council)</td>
<td>1999 (1), 2003 (0), 2007 (0), 2011 (0), 2015 (0), 2019 (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 shows that One Nation was able to retain some support in its strong state (Queensland), particularly in regional areas. This helped One Nation retain the seat of Tablelands from 2001 to 2009 in the Queensland parliament, giving the party its last remaining parliamentary seat after it lost its Queensland Senate seat at the 2004 federal election.

There were two main factors that led to the decline of One Nation in the early 2000s: the Howard government’s adoption of positions that appealed to Pauline Hanson’s support base, and the party’s own internal problems. John Howard courted One Nation voters during his early prime ministership by portraying them as Australian battlers who were good upstanding people. The language used by Howard had similarities to another Liberal Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, who said he stood for the “forgotten people” of Australia. Overall, Howard claimed that his government
defended “middle Australia”. Regarding Indigenous issues, Howard refused to allow Parliament to apologise to the Stolen Generation after the publication of the *Bringing Them Home* report in 1997. This stance also contributed to his success.

*Figure 3: One Nation primary vote share at New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australian state elections*

![Diagram showing One Nation State Election Performance](chart.png)

However, the most significant event through this period was the Tampa crisis in August 2001, in which the government turned away over 400 distressed refugees who had been rescued as sea by a Norwegian container vessel. Speaking at the 2001 federal Liberal party campaign launch, Howard said Australians were:

... a generous open-hearted people taking more refugees on a per capita basis than any nation except Canada. We have a proud record of welcoming people from 140 different nations. But we will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come.\textsuperscript{48}

In an examination of the Howard prime ministership in \textit{The Monthly} in 2006, academic Robert Manne argued the Howard government had abandoned the concepts of multiculturalism, integration with South-East Asia and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.\textsuperscript{49} In particular, the Tampa episode had:

... brought to a definitive conclusion to the time in which the government – under the shadow of the Hanson backlash against multiculturalism, Asian immigration, Aboriginal land rights and globalisation – had first slowed and then reversed the cultural trajectory of the Hawke and Keating Years.\textsuperscript{50}

During this time, One Nation also experienced internal turmoil. According to academic Jennifer Rutherford, who interviewed former One Nation members, there was discontent over lack of democracy within the party and the controlling nature of the organisation, which discouraged party members from talking to the media.\textsuperscript{51} Party member Scott Balson claimed that party was “very autocratic, you would do as you were told or get out”.\textsuperscript{52} The power of the party was concentrated in the hands of Hanson, David Ettridge and David Oldfield, who appointed themselves as directors of the party. Members also claimed that Ettridge used his power to expel members to silence opposition and instil fear in others.\textsuperscript{53} The autocratic nature of the party was

\footnotesize


\textsuperscript{50} Manne, \textit{Little America: How John Howard Has Changed Australia}.


\textsuperscript{52} Rutherford, 192.

\textsuperscript{53} Rutherford, 197.
confirmed by Heather Hill, who won the party’s Queensland Senate seat in 1998 before being disqualified for her dual British citizenship. Hill complained of a lack of freedom of speech within the party, and that Hanson, Ettridge and Oldfield held “positions of absolute power”.54

The party’s internal crises were a factor behind the conviction of both Pauline Hanson and David Ettridge on electoral fraud in August 2003, resulting in both being sentenced to three years in prison. Hanson and Ettridge were found guilty of fraudulently obtaining party registration under the Electoral Act 1992 (Queensland) by supplying the names and addresses of 500 people who were party supporters rather than members. Hanson and Ettridge were released after their convictions were overturned the following November.55

3.4 THE ONE NATION COMEBACK: 2016-2019

Despite One Nation’s decline after 2001, the party held on to a single seat in the Queensland Parliament through to 2009, and Pauline Hanson came close to winning a seat on at least one occasion. However, the party would not return to prominence until the 2016 double dissolution election.

3.4.1 The 2016 federal election and its aftermath

Prior to its success in winning four Senate seats at the 2016 federal election, Pauline Hanson’s profile was boosted by her performance at the 2015 state election in Queensland, when she ran in the seat of Lockyer. In that seat Hanson won 49.78% of the two-party preferred vote, falling narrowly short of defeating the Liberal National Party candidate with 50.22%. After preferences there were barely more than 100 votes between the two candidates.

The party’s breakthrough came after the then Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, called a double dissolution election for July 2016. Since all 12 Senate seats in each state are vacated at a double dissolution, this resulted in a lower quota for election and improved opportunities for strongly performing minor parties. One Nation duly succeeded in winning two Senate seats in Queensland, including by Hanson herself,

54 Rutherford, 192-3.
together with further seats in New South Wales and Western Australia, despite recording only 4.28% of the Senate vote nationally.\textsuperscript{56}

The return of Hanson to the national spotlight was followed by further successes in subsequent state elections. One Nation did particularly well in the seat of Mirani at the 2017 Queensland state election, which was gained from Labor. In Western Australia, One Nation won three seats in the Legislative Council at the 2017 state election. At the New South Wales 2019 state election, One Nation won two seats in the Legislative Council, including one for former federal Labor leader Mark Latham.

3.5 CONCLUSION

As was the case when the party first emerged in 1998, One Nation’s resurgence in 2016 has prompted debate as to whether it can best be understood in terms of cultural factors or economic strains. The Grattan Institute’s report into the “rise of protest politics in Australia” argues cultural issues have been paramount, with those voting for One Nation and other right-wing minor parties emphasising the importance of on the “Australian way” of life. This perspective has been further encouraged by the fact that the global financial crisis, which was seen to have stimulated right-wing politics internationally, was less severe in Australia than most comparable democracies.

However, the pattern of support for One Nation has been reflected by economic challenges faced by regional areas, particularly those dependent on the mining industry. It has been in these areas that One Nation has achieved localised support at both federal and state elections in recent years. As well as the party’s success in the Senate in Queensland in 2016, this has contributed to the party’s return to the Queensland and Western Australian state parliaments in 2017, in the first case by winning a seat in the state’s north and in the second by winning three seats in the Legislative Council, with the highest levels of support coming from the state’s regional and mining areas.

Chapter Three: Economic Voting

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the economy and voter behaviour has been long established in political science. However, since the focus of research has been the conditions in which changes in government occur, studies have tended to assume two-party competition and neglect minor parties. The objective of this chapter is to evaluate the different models of economic voting as a basis for minor party voting. While imperfect as predictors of election outcomes, these models provide valuable insights into the motivations of voters. This chapter refers to parties that are populist, defined by the *Oxford Handbook of Populism* as “the idea that ‘the people’ can authoritatively recover power from the government to reconstitute institutions, or wrestle power from corrupt or self-serving elites”.¹ It is proposed that a failure of the political establishment to address economic concerns has resulted in voters turning to populist options such as One Nation, rather than continuing to alternate between the existing major parties.

4.1 ECONOMIC VOTING THEORIES

Economic voting refers to the theory that voters are inclined to vote for or against the incumbent based on economic performance. Voters evaluate their well-being and receive information regarding the state or nation’s economic climate and form their judgement accordingly. International research shows the economy is of key importance in determining election outcomes.²

In Australia, research shows voters value strong economic management, and often view both the microeconomic and macroeconomic situation as important for determining vote choice.³ An opinion poll from Roy Morgan in mid-2017 indicated that 38% of Australians regarded the economy or an economic issue as the most important

problem concerning Australians. Similar patterns have emerged from the Australian Election Study survey series, in which management of the economy was ranked the most or second most (after health) important out of 10 election issues in 2010, 2013 and 2016.

4.1.1 Pocketbook and sociotropic voting

Research into economic voting, particularly in the United States, has emphasised the distinction between pocketbook and sociotropic effects. Sociotropic voting involves assessment of the condition of the national or regional economy in choosing which party to vote for. Pocketbook voting involves choosing which party to vote for based on an assessment of which will provide the most personal financial benefit. Researchers of voter behaviour have been divided on the importance of these two effects, but most found sociotropic assessments to be the most important.

Research in the United States has indicated that voters in presidential elections tended to support the incumbent when the economy was performing well, even if they were worse off financially. However, a study by Healy, Persson and Snowberg has indicated that both factors are significant. This was because voters are “not myopic” and use their own economic information to make inferences about the broader economy, with the result that pocketbook and sociotropic considerations are both important.

Survey data from 2016 Australian Election Study found the Coalition government had won the election despite voters considering their personal financial

---

9 Healy, Persson and Snowberg, “Digging into the Pocketbook,” 783.
prospects to be better than those for the economy. In response to a survey question relating to Australia's financial situation, 47% said it had become worse with only 10% reporting an improvement. However, respondents were less negative about their personal situation, with 35% reporting they were worse off compared with a year ago and 48% saying their situation was about the same. Overall, the study showed voters were less likely to expect the economy to improve nationally, with most expecting the economy would either remain the same or get worse.\(^\text{10}\)

These results showed that voters were engaged with a perceived negative economic situation, which according to the sociotropic model should have prompted them to vote against the incumbent. The outcome of the election raises the possibility that negative sociotropic evaluations that might have led voters to favour the major party in opposition were instead responsible for the unprecedented levels of support recorded by minor parties, and by One Nation.

### 4.1.2 Reward-punishment model

The reward-punishment model of voting behaviour suggests voters reward governments for good economic management by re-electing them and punish poor performance by voting for the opposition.\(^\text{11}\) The idea that incumbents suffer defeat due to economic mismanagement has strong support. As Gabor Simonovits notes, “hundreds of academic articles” argue that incumbents suffer when economic conditions worsen.\(^\text{12}\)

While the reward-punishment model is theoretically applicable to any democracy, researchers of Australian voter behaviour have been sceptical of its value in explaining electoral outcomes. According to Hellwig and McAllister, “the research on electoral behavior in Australia suggests that economic voting is, at best, weak”.\(^\text{13}\) McAllister argued that this weakness could be explained by short three-year (federal) election cycles and strong economic performance over a long period.

---

\(^{10}\) Cameron and McAllister, “Trends in Australian Public Opinion,” 44.


Furthermore, research from 2008 showed over half of Australian voters felt the "world economy" was mostly responsible for economic conditions in Australia, compared with less than 30% for government policymakers.\textsuperscript{14}

However, the notion of weak economic voting effects in Australia has been challenged by Leigh and Wolfers, based on econometric models for forecasting elections. The study of such models in relation to the 2004 election concluded that these models “merited greater prominence in the media and in public discourse”.\textsuperscript{15} They also noted the 2004 election results suggested such models were becoming "increasingly important" despite evidence for economic voting in Australia having been "historically weak".\textsuperscript{16}

\subsection*{4.2 OTHER RELEVANT MODELS}

Much of the Australian literature on voting behaviour has emphasised sociological factors such as class and migrant background rather than economic evaluations. While such considerations remain important, growing electoral volatility suggests an increased potential for voters to switch between parties based on a reward-punishment response. This has been reflected in landslide election results in New South Wales in 2011, Queensland in 2012 and Western Australia in 2017 and 2021, which are consistent with a greater role for short-term evaluations, including those based on the economy.

\subsubsection*{4.2.1 Party identification}

The party identification theory relates to hereditary voting where voters form lasting attachments to parties through parental socialisation in childhood. Hellwig and McAllister note that hereditary voting has only modestly declined in Australia compared to other countries, which they attribute to institutional factors, strength of party identification and how Australian voters attribute responsibility for policy outcomes.\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{14} Hellwig and McAllister, “Does the Economy Matter?,” 238.
\bibitem{16} Leigh and Wolfers, 325.
\bibitem{17} Hellwig and McAllister, “Does the Economy Matter?”, 237-239.
\end{thebibliography}
While McAllister’s research found strong party identification to be related to a relative weakness of economic voting in Australia, subsequent trends have called the strength of party identification into doubt. Research from Australian National University’s *Trends in Australian Political Opinion (1987-2016)* found the number of respondents who said they always voted for the same party fell from 72% in 1967 to 40% in 2016. The changes were particularly steep over elections between 2013 and 2019, as minor party voting in the Senate increased markedly. The share of respondents citing no party identification went from 14% in 2010 to 17% in 2013 and 19% in 2016, while the number identifying as lifetime party supporters went from 31% to 21% for Liberal and National Party voters and 24% to 16% for Labor voters.

The decline in identification with the major parties has not been matched by a rise in identification with minor parties. While there was a rising trend for the Greens from 1996, only 9% identified with the party in 2016. Instead, there was a faster rate of increase in those recording no party identification, from 14% in 2010 to 17% in 2013 and 19% in 2016.

Arguably, change in the political environment had recurred throughout Australian electoral history, and the party identification model had never provided a reliable guide to voter behaviour. Murray Goot has criticised the primacy of the party identification model in research derived from the Australian Election Study, arguing the concept fails to account for instability in the party system over time, and particularly for “new parties that attract substantial electoral support”.

### 4.2.2 Class voting

Class voting refers to voters’ tendency to vote according to the social class with which they identify, which has been a cornerstone of party competition in Australia. Labor has historically drawn support from the working-class, while the Liberal Party and its predecessors have sought support outside of the non-manual sector to achieve electoral majorities.

---

19 McAllister and Cameron, 23.
22 McAllister, *The Australian Voter: 50 Years of Change*, 149-158.
However, the strength of class voting in Australia has lately come into question. This trend has been reflected in a confusion of class identity in Australian politics. Accounts of the electoral success of John Howard argue that he related to voters who perceived themselves as “battlers”, in contrast to Paul Keating, the Labor leader he defeated in 1996. Howard seized the opportunity to connect with blue-collar voters, while Keating focused on non-economic issues.\(^\text{23}\) This suggested an ongoing weakening of the association between Labor and the working class, which had long been the foundation of party identification in Australia.\(^\text{24}\)

Class voting can be re-examined through two different perspectives. It can refer to economic assets (whether in savings or investment) and/or social and cultural capital. A person may be less inclined to prioritise their employment prestige, opting to focus on appreciating the arts and the quality of their social networks.\(^\text{25}\) Based on polling from the Australian National University, a study found that there are five observable classes in Australia. These include: established affluent, emergent affluent, mobile middle, established middle and established working class.\(^\text{26}\) Given the findings from Biddle and Sheppard, there is evidence of social mobility among the working and middle classes. For those who are more affluent, their position tends to reflect their parents’ economic and social standing.

A study by McAllister and Makkai found that voters with higher amounts of economic assets were more likely to vote Liberal-National, whereas Labor and Greens tended to lose support from these voters. In terms of cultural factors, the study also found that musical activities predispose a voter to support centre-left parties, whereas family-based activities tend to predispose people to the centre-right.\(^\text{27}\) McAllister and


\(^{24}\) Goot and Watson, 269-271.


Makkai noted in their literature review that some studies have found class voting has evolved in the post-industrial area.

4.2.3 Materialism and post-materialism

Materialism and post-materialism are both terms used widely in Australian research, particularly in explaining minor parties such as the Australian Democrats and the Greens. A post-materialist voter is more likely to consider “quality of life” issues when voting, whereas the materialist voter is more concerned with physical security and economic well-being. Post-materialist issues include the environment, women’s issues and human rights. Generally, people who grew up in situations of financial security are more likely to have post-materialist values than those who grow up with financial hardship. The post-war era provided a rapid economic and social change that the pre-war generation did not experience, reflected in a greater focus on materialist values among the older generation. Post-materialism is identified with the political left, and its ideals are associated in current Australian politics with the Greens, whose supporters tend to be tertiary-educated and reside in inner city areas.

In examining non-economic factors, it appears that post-materialism and cultural interests can also have an influence on voting behaviour. Both support for post-materialism values (i.e. support for environmental care) and cultural activity engagement tend to predispose a person to support left-wing parties.

4.3 ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND VOTING PATTERNS

4.3.1 Unemployment and underemployment

Unemployment is a common concern among voters, particularly young and middle-aged workers. According to Helgason and Mérola, higher rates of occupational unemployment often led to negative evaluations of the economy. The unemployment

rate in Australia has fluctuated somewhat, increasing because of the global financial crisis and the end of a mining and resources boom. At the time of the 2016 election, the unemployment rate was 5.7% compared with 4.1% in April 2008, shortly before the onset of the crisis.32

While the number of workers working less than one hour a week remains modest, this obscures a rising problem of underemployment. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has a broad definition of unemployment that considers a person employed if they work for one hour or more a week.33 Underemployment refers to workers that have part-time employment but are unable to find full-time work despite the desire to work more hours.34 The underemployment issue relates to many challenges experienced by Australians on low to middle incomes that may be reflected in feelings of hostility towards the major parties, and a desire to collectively “punish” them on economic grounds.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics released a spotlight study on underemployment that showed young people (aged 15 to 24) and low-skilled workers were most heavily affected. Until February 2003, the unemployment rate was lower than the underemployment rate. However, over the last 15 years, underemployment has continuously surpassed the unemployment rate at around 8.7%, with the unemployment rate hovering between 5% and 6%.35

Issues of underemployment have been given further impetus by the rise of the “gig economy”. While underemployed workers may use gig work such as Uber driving to supplement their income, other issues arise from this type of work. A prominent example is the lack of superannuation, which will impact a young worker’s future as

they reach retirement age. Further, due to the nature of “gig” employment, companies can bypass standard labour laws, which include the minimum wage. Unlike a regular job where the employee has equipment and material supplied to complete tasks, gig employees have to supply their own.

Underemployment and gig economy employment are important economic issues, particularly for young voters. A study conducted in 2013 found approximately one in five young people had voted for minor parties. Most of this support has been for the Greens, particularly in inner-city areas. However, the federal electorate of Herbert, based around Townsville in north Queensland, is an example of a regional electorate with many young voters (according to the 2016 census, the average age in the electorate is 33, compared with 38 nationally) where the growth of the minor party vote has gone to populist parties, including One Nation.

4.3.2 Income and economic Inequality

Income inequality has been a prominent point of discussion in political science in explaining the rise of populist politics. However, the extent of income inequality as an issue in Australia is disputed. A study by Alan Fenna and Alan Tapper found the growth in inequality had only been modest. This contrasts with the view of John Quiggin, who says that income inequality has grown substantially since the 1980s, “both because of short term variability has increased and because lifetime income has become riskier.”

The discussion around income inequality in Australia has been centred on the growing gap between the rich and poor as the economy has moved towards market liberalisation. Income inequality has been encouraged by the de-unionisation of the

38 Stewart and Stanford, 423.
workplace, which has tended to weaken wage growth as workers have lost bargaining power, while also reducing the traditional union base of the Australian Labor Party. This is a potential economic explanation for One Nation support, much of which comes from working-class voters who formerly supported Labor.42

4.3.3 Inflation
Inflation has not been a significant issue in Australian elections in recent times, as the rate has been relatively low since the early 2000s. According to the Reserve Bank of Australia, inflation as of May 2018 sat at 1.9% and has hovered between 1% and 2% since 2015.43 This contrasts with the 1970s when inflation played a major role in the difficulties of the Whitlam government.44 After the 1980s, inflation levels remained relatively stable, with fewer extreme fluctuations.45

Survey research suggests voters tend to hold right-wing governments to a higher standard on inflation, whereas for left-wing governments the emphasis is more on unemployment.46 Palmer and Whitten have theorised that voters are most concerned when increases in consumer prices are unexpected. Generally, voters would not punish the incumbent if increases were foreseen or accounted for in future economic planning. The study contrasted the re-election of the Labour government in New Zealand in 1987, where the country was experiencing negative economic growth and high inflation, with a decline in electoral support for the governing party in Canada in 1988, where inflation was modest. The difference between the two elections was that economic conditions were worse than expected by Canadian voters.47

42 Robert Stimson and Rex Davis, “Disillusionment and Disenchantment at the Fringe: Explaining the Geography of the One Nation Party Vote at the Queensland Election,” People and Place 6, no. 3 (1998): 73.
While these results do not correlate with the reward-punishment model, concern about inflation may still have an important effect on elections and public policy. A study from Tim Vlandas has shown the significance the elderly vote has in motivating governments to combat inflation. Generally, older voters are more likely to be inflation averse. In countries that have a large ageing demographic, the elderly voter becomes more powerful, which results in governments pursuing lower inflation.\textsuperscript{48} While this study focused solely on one voting demographic, it outlined the connection between the elderly, inflation-averse behaviour and support for conservative parties.

### 4.3.4 Housing affordability

Another problem associated with income inequality is housing affordability. Housing stress has been an issue for many Australians, with home ownership falling for Australians under 65.\textsuperscript{49} From 2001 to 2011, the median house price escalated from $167,000 to $417,000 while post-tax wage growth increased only from $36,000 to $57,000. Further, housing affordability moved from three times the average annual wage to nine times.\textsuperscript{50}

Pauline Hanson sought to tie the housing affordability issue to immigration, by blaming it for increasing housing prices.\textsuperscript{51} Overall, housing affordability has been a crucial voter issue. A survey in 2017 found that approximately 35% of respondents acknowledged the issue as important, jumping from around 22% in 2014. The only political issue ranked higher than housing affordability in 2017 was health care.\textsuperscript{52}


4.4 MICROECONOMIC FACTORS

Microeconomic factors refer to localised or industry-specific factors. These factors are of significance to this thesis, as their effects tend to be concentrated in electorates that have suffered from the decline of manufacturing or short-term downturns in industries such as mining. Such changes may have led to disaffection with mainstream political parties and made alternatives more appealing.

Localised workforce changes in the mining and resources industry have created problems for Labor, which has had to reconcile the interests of its blue-collar base with concerns for climate change and the environment. An example at federal level is the electorate of Hunter in New South Wales, held as of 2021 by Joel Fitzgibbon of the Labor party’s Right faction. This area is known for coal mining, with 9% of its workforce employed by the coal mining sector according to the 2016 census, compared with 0.6% for New South Wales as a whole. At the 2019 election, Labor’s primary vote decreased from 51.6% to 37.6%, in large part due to the success of One Nation in polling 21.6%. Fitzgibbon resigned from the Labor front bench in 2020 because he believed Labor was alienating its blue-collar support base through its pursuit of carbon emission targets.53

Another notable area where issues relating to the mining industry have influenced voter behaviour is in regional Queensland, particularly around Townsville, which has likewise experienced growth in support for One Nation and other small parties at several federal and state elections. Townsville was noted as a prosperous economy with a fly-in-fly-out economy at the peak of the economic boom before 2008, but experienced double-digit unemployment as commodity prices fell. Townsville was particularly struck by the liquidation of a nickel refinery owned by Clive Palmer, who had held the Queensland seat of Fairfax in the House of Representatives with his Palmer United Party from 2013 to 2016.54 The company collapsed in 2015 with

loss of 800 jobs. Many struggled to find work, while others who found work were earning less money compared to their refinery job. Minor party candidates, notably those of One Nation and Katter’s Australian Party, won around a third of the vote between them in the Townsville seats of Thuringowa and Mundingburra at the 2017 Queensland state election.

Industry transition has also been a crucial part of economic change in Australia. Car manufacturing was for many years a strong industry, especially in the years after World War II. However, the industry has undergone long-term decline, particularly over the past two decades, reflecting broader trends in manufacturing. The change began in the 1970s and 1980s when Australian governments began shifting towards market liberalisation. The Hawke-Keating Labor government policies pursued anti-inflation measures, tariff reduction and deregulation, which reflected the policy trends under Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom. This coincided with the privatisation of entities such as Qantas and Commonwealth Bank. Privatisation had been controversial, particularly among the traditional working-class support base of the Labor Party. According to John Quiggin, the move towards market liberalisation has resulted in increased inequality.

Economic change in Australia is demonstrated clearly in the manufacturing sector. Twenty-five per cent of men were employed in manufacturing in 1978, but by 1997 the rate was below 18%. Figures from 2017 show that manufacturing now makes up less than 8% of the Australian workforce. The decline of manufacturing over recent decades has been particularly significant for the economy of South

---

58 Quiggin, Zombie Economics, 183.
Australia. The scaling down and closure of Holden car manufacturing at Elizabeth in northern Adelaide from 2013 cost 950 jobs, which was followed by an increase in the state’s unemployment rate from 5.8% to 6.1%. A study found there would be 1,600 job losses from 2013 to 2017 as a direct result of the Holden car manufacturing plant closure. It was estimated that the flow-on effects could increase South Australia’s unemployment figure by 13,000.

This may have contributed to the dissatisfaction with the major parties in South Australia, which was evident when the Nick Xenophon Team recorded 24.9% of the Senate vote in 2013 and 21.8% in 2016, and the related SA-Best party polled 14.2% of the vote at the state election in 2018. Xenophon campaigned on local issues in South Australia, particularly the closure of car manufacturing plants. However, compared with One Nation, support for Xenophon’s parties was evenly distributed across the state. An analysis by Catherine Hanrahan for the ABC found no correlation between income and support for Xenophon, nor were there any correlations between current or former manufacturing workers and support for Xenophon.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In summary, the political science literature provides substantial evidence for economic effects on voting behaviour. The US literature finds clearer evidence of sociotropic than pocketbook effects, while providing evidence that both play a role.

---


The evidence in Australia has been weaker, but the main alternative explanation, strength of party identification, has been brought into question by the increases in minor party voting. This has occurred at a time when parts of Australia have experienced an economic downturn, reflected in high rates of underemployment as well as unemployment. Local examples of economic change which can impact political outcomes include the downturn in the mining industry affecting areas including regional Queensland and the closure of car manufacturing in South Australia. Equally significantly, these areas have experienced a significant increase in minor party support, specifically for One Nation in Queensland and Nick Xenophon’s party in South Australia.
Chapter Four: One Nation Case Study

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The first chapter explored issues that may explain minor party voting and found that economically motivated protest voting to be a significant factor, particularly in relation to the surge in minor party support over the past decade. Chapter two focused on the initial emergence of One Nation with a focus on the factors underpinning their support, which included economic vulnerability in regional areas and among white blue-collar workers. The third chapter reviewed existing political science research into economic voting in Australia and noted that recent work on election forecasting found economic indicators had some value in predicting election outcomes, despite the tendency of academic literature to downplay the role of economic voting in Australia.

This chapter considers whether the 2016-2017 surge in minor party voting represented an emergence of economic voting in Australia, using One Nation’s performance at the 2016 federal and 2017 Queensland state elections as case studies. Linear regression analysis is used to establish the statistical relationship between key economic indicators and the vote for One Nation across different polling booths. The economic factors that are examined are unemployment and income, both in absolute terms and with respect to change between the 2011 and 2016 censuses, with the latter serving to measure the impact of industry decline in certain parts of the country. The data collected for this study was extracted from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Australian Electoral Commission and the Electoral Commission of Queensland.¹

5.1 2016 FEDERAL ELECTION (SENATE)

Before proceeding with the linear regression analysis, this section details the economic circumstances prevailing in regional Queensland at the time of the 2016 federal elections and their potential electoral consequences through a review of the relevant census and election results data.

¹ I am grateful for the assistance of election analyst, William Bowe, who assisted me in extracting and interpreting the data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Booth</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>ON Senate Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flagstone Creek</td>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>37.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentville</td>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>37.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenore Grove</td>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>34.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helidon</td>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>34.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blenheim</td>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>34.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Hill</td>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>34.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma Ma Creek</td>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>32.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laidley</td>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>31.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Clarendon</td>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>31.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curra</td>
<td>Wide Bay</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>31.66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When polling booths with fewer than 200 formal votes are excluded (as they will be through the remainder of this discussion), the 52 strongest booths for One Nation out of a total of 6347 were all in Queensland. This is illustrated in Table 4, which shows the ten booths with the highest One Nation vote share. One Nation support was particularly strong in the electorate of Wright, a largely rural electorate in the state’s south-east. Outside of Queensland, One Nation’s strongest booth was the Cobar Pre-Poll Voting Centre in the electorate of Parkes (22.91%), in the interior of New South Wales. In Western Australia, the One Nation vote was likewise highest in country (Durack and O’Connor) and semi-rural (Canning) seats.

Conversely, the 18 booths where One Nation recorded zero votes typified where their support was particularly weak. These are listed in Table 5, in descending order of formal votes cast. Most are in inner urban electorates in Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart, but they also include three strongly Indigenous booths in the seat of Leichhardt in northern Queensland, and booths with high migrant populations in the Melbourne seats of Menzies, Hotham and Bruce.
Table 5: Booths with zero primary votes for One Nation, primary vote- Senate election 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Booth</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Formal Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>1803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawthorn PPVC</td>
<td>Higgins</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>1437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newmarket</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>1335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Melbourne</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>1317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box Hill PPVC</td>
<td>Menzies</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>1302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrumbeema South</td>
<td>Hotham</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>1260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond West</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>1177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Park</td>
<td>Melbourne Ports</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>1158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waimea Heights</td>
<td>Denison</td>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowanyama</td>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakleigh</td>
<td>Hotham</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napranum</td>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syndal South</td>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoreham</td>
<td>Flinders</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noble Park</td>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamwoy</td>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merricks North</td>
<td>Flinders</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annandale</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.1 Unemployment and the 2016 election

The analysis below details support for One Nation at polling booth level at the 2016 Senate election, matched to the unemployment rate at the corresponding SA1 (Statistical Area Level 1) as recorded at the censuses of 2011 and 2016. Table 6 displays the top 15 booths in the country by unemployment rate, again restricted to booths with 200 or more formal votes. The range in support for One Nation in these booths’ points to differences between low-income urban and regional areas, particularly urban areas with high populations of non-English speakers as compared with regional areas with higher populations of English-only speakers.
Table 6: One Nation vote and SA1 unemployment rate by polling booth, primary vote - Senate election 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Booth</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Unemployment</th>
<th>ON Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cherbourg</td>
<td>Wide Bay</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarrabah</td>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>46.31%</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope Valley</td>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>42.13%</td>
<td>1.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrawong</td>
<td>Cunningham</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurukun</td>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>37.92%</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowanyama</td>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>36.64%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moree East</td>
<td>Parkes</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>36.29%</td>
<td>9.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawksburn Central</td>
<td>Higgins</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>36.19%</td>
<td>0.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acacia Ridge South</td>
<td>Moreton</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>34.38%</td>
<td>9.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collingwood</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>34.32%</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirwan South</td>
<td>Herbert</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>13.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coledale Community</td>
<td>New England</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>32.97%</td>
<td>4.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napranum</td>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>32.86%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tweed Mills</td>
<td>Calare</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>32.56%</td>
<td>12.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moe</td>
<td>McMillan</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>30.53%</td>
<td>5.23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Owing to the clear split between metropolitan and country areas, there is no obvious relationship between unemployment and support for One Nation at a national or state level. Urban booths with high or increasing unemployment nonetheless recorded relatively low support for One Nation. For example, the highest unemployment rate for a Queensland metropolitan booth was at Acacia Ridge South, in the Brisbane seat of Moreton (as displayed in table 6). This booth recorded an increase in unemployment from 16.40% in 2011 to 34.38% in 2016. However, 9.34% of the formal votes went to One Nation, which is well below many other areas in regional Queensland where One Nation’s percentage share was in the double digits. Significantly, this is a multicultural area where nearly half the population (48%) speaks a language other than English at home.

In Warrawong Central, One Nation received only 31 of the 1033 total formal votes (3.1%). Like Acacia Ridge South, the Warrawong Central area is linguistically diverse, with only 44.59% of the population speaking only English at home. Such
results are consistent with the low level of support for One Nation among voters from ethnically diverse backgrounds. This reflects Pauline Hanson’s views on immigration and multiculturalism, which have been covered in the earlier chapters.

In regional areas, however, there were notable examples of strong One Nation support in pockets of rising unemployment. The Kirwan South booth in the Townsville seat of Herbert, where unemployment increased from 13.80% to 33.33% between 2011 and 2016, had 264 out of 2008 formal votes go to One Nation. However, a significant variation in this pattern was regional areas with high Indigenous populations, which had high and rising unemployment but low One Nation support. Of the high unemployment booths listed in Table 6, three of the top six were Hope Vale, Aurukun and Kowanyama in the north Queensland electorate of Leichhardt, where the Indigenous populations were respectively 92.95%, 90.84% and 90.68% of the total.

Overall, an examination of the unemployment data shows it is difficult to make assumptions about an area without understanding the demographics of the region, specifically in relation to the size of its non-English speaking population and the number of Indigenous people. These factors will be considered in the statistical analysis.

5.1.2 Regression and unemployment/unemployment growth

The following section features a linear regression analysis of the relationship between the dependent variable of One Nation Senate vote by polling booth at the 2016 federal election, and the key independent variables of unemployment and unemployment growth.

Tables 7 and Table 8 show the results of modelling identifying the relationship between unemployment in 2016 and the One Nation vote, using the rate of unemployment rate in the former case (the “rate” model) and the change in the unemployment rate between the 2011 and 2016 censuses in the latter (the “growth” model). As will be the case throughout this chapter, the models include control variables to account for differences between the states and the metropolitan/regional divide. They account for the fact that One Nation performs strongly in Queensland compared to other states, where the rise in minor party support was instead reflected in the success of parties including the Nick Xenophon Team in South Australia and the Jacqui Lambie Network in Tasmania.
The state-level effects are accounted for with dummy variables for each of the six states other than New South Wales. New South Wales is intentionally excluded as a “reference” group, so that estimates of the One Nation vote in this state can be achieved by setting the other state dummy variables at zero. These serve as control variables so that the economic variables produce results independent of these effects. Similarly, “Regional” is a dummy variable set at 1 for booths located outside the metropolitan areas, and 0 for those within them.

Reflecting the patterns noted in the previous section, the models also include variables for the percentage of the population that speaks only English at home, and for the Indigenous population. This recognises the fact that unemployment figures alone, or even economic factors alone, do not explain the variation in One Nation support across the country. Clearly support for populist parties must be understood partly in terms of cultural factors, as represented here through the language and Indigenous variables.

Table 7: Regression results for One Nation Senate (primary) vote by polling booth at 2016 federal election (2016 unemployment rate model)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unstandardised B</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>Sig. p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(constant)</td>
<td>-.011</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Spoken Only</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional (dummy)</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC dummy</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD dummy</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA dummy</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA dummy</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS dummy</td>
<td>-.029</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² = 0.532

A brief overview of the terminology used in this thesis is as follows. The p-value refers to the statistical significance of the relationship, with a relationship deemed significant when the value is below 0.050, and highly significant when it is below 0.010. Coefficients record the mathematical relationship between the dependent and the
independent variables. When there is a positive coefficient, the mean value of the dependent variable tends to increase as the value of the independent variable increases. When there is a negative coefficient, the dependent variable tends to decrease as the independent variable increases. The $R^2$ value refers to the line of best fit, which is between 0 and 100% (or 0 and 1), with 0% indicating no relationship and 100% a perfect relationship.\(^2\)

Table 8: Regression results for One Nation (primary) Senate vote by polling booth at 2016 federal election: growth in unemployment rate model (2011-2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unstandardised B</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>Sig. p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(constant)</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Growth</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Spoken Only</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional (dummy)</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC dummy</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD dummy</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA dummy</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA dummy</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS dummy</td>
<td>-.027</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = 0.532$

The results in Tables 7 and Table 8 show that unemployment had a statistically significant positive relationship with the One Nation Senate vote in both the “rate” model and the “growth” model. The coefficients for unemployment are 0.138 for the former and 0.08 for the latter. This suggests that for every extra percentage point in the unemployment rate, a booth would typically record an extra 0.138% in support for One Nation. For unemployment growth, every percentage point of increase between 2011 and 2016 typically resulted in a 0.08% increase in the One Nation vote

The results for the control variables confirm the points noted earlier: that One Nation support is highest in English-speaking areas, regional areas and in Queensland generally. The variables measuring these effects have statistically significant positive coefficients. Conversely, relatively weak support for the party in Victoria and South Australia is reflected in the negative coefficients for these variables. Since the state dummy variables provide a comparison with the reference variable of New South Wales, the lack of a significant result for Western Australia shows there was little difference in One Nation support between these two states. The Indigenous variable does not appear to help explain the pattern of One Nation support as the coefficient is positive, contrary to expectations. As will be discussed in the next section, this variable had the expected effect at the Queensland state election.

The relationships between One Nation support in Queensland and unemployment and unemployment growth are illustrated in Figure 4 and Figure 5. It is
necessary to focus on one state for this chart due to the importance of state-level effects, as demonstrated by the dummy variables in Table 7 and Table 8.

Figure 5: Unemployment growth (between 2011 and 2016) and One Nation primary vote (percentage) at 2016 Senate election by polling booth (Queensland)

R² = 0.015

The R² values for Figure 3 and Figure 4 are extremely low, indicating weak relationships overall. However, the regression results show how important it is to recognise that these graphs include data for the whole of Queensland. The state contains wide variation in ethnic diversity, particularly between Brisbane and the rest of the state. Further, both charts display many outliers in which there is high unemployment (and unemployment growth) and weak support for One Nation. Such results may reflect a high population of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander people and/or people from non-English speaking backgrounds. Figure 6 below illustrates the relationship between areas that were not linguistically diverse and the One Nation vote.
Notwithstanding the outliers, the chart records an overall positive relationship between speaking English only and support for One Nation, consistent with the party’s lack of support among non-English speakers. While each of these graphs indicate that unemployment and language provide only partial explanations for patterns in One Nation support, the effects they demonstrate are clearly statistically significant.

5.1.3 Indigenous voters and One Nation

In considering the effects of income and unemployment on the level of One Nation support, it is important to account for the unusual behaviour of booths in remote Indigenous communities. Many areas with high Indigenous populations also have low incomes and high unemployment. If the relationship were straightforward, it would follow that One Nation would enjoy strong support among Indigenous voters, when clearly the opposite is true.
Previous election results have indicated that few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders vote for One Nation. In Pauline Hanson’s 1996 maiden speech, she not only targeted immigrants from Asian countries, but was also critical of Australia’s first peoples. When speaking about Indigenous people, Hanson said that “present governments are encouraging separating in Australia by providing opportunities, land, moneys and facilities available only to Aboriginals”.

Further, One Nation voters tend to have a harsher attitude towards immigrants and Indigenous Australians compared to Liberal and Labor voters. As the pattern of voting in remote communities demonstrates, Hanson’s views are evidently not popular with Indigenous Australians.

---


The plot above illustrates the relationship between the Indigenous population and support for One Nation, using Queensland booths only for purposes of clarity. Given Indigenous people only make up a small minority of the population (2.8%), the plot shows that most parts of the country have a low population of Indigenous people, with the distinct exception of Indigenous communities at the northern end of Queensland. The booths from these communities form a cluster at the top left, indicating negligible support for One Nation. To control for peculiarity of Indigenous booths, the linear regression models include a variable recording the Indigenous share of the population.

The distinctiveness of Indigenous voting can be further illustrated by examining the booths with the highest Indigenous populations from the federal electorate of Leichhardt, which covers the Cape York Peninsula in north Queensland. According to the 2016 census, 4% of the Queensland population is either Aboriginal Australian or Torres Strait Islander compared to 2.8% of the total Australian population. However,
the Indigenous communities of north Queensland are a distinctive outlier in this respect.

Table 9: Leichhardt booths and remote Indigenous communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Booth</th>
<th>Indigenous Population</th>
<th>Median Income (weekly)</th>
<th>One Nation Senate Primary Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aurukun</td>
<td>90.83%</td>
<td>$677</td>
<td>4 out of 572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomfield</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
<td>$682</td>
<td>6 out of 216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowanyama</td>
<td>90.67%</td>
<td>$841</td>
<td>0 out of 445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockhart River</td>
<td>89.64%</td>
<td>$810</td>
<td>2 out of 260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napranum</td>
<td>95.57%</td>
<td>$770</td>
<td>0 out of 338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pormpuraaw</td>
<td>88.36%</td>
<td>$733</td>
<td>4 out of 338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This point is demonstrated by Table 9, which records the six booths in Leichhardt with the highest shares of Indigenous population. In every case, Indigenous persons are the overwhelming majority among the local population. The second notable feature of the results is the low levels of income. The median family incomes are all less than $850 and in one case $677, which compares with $1661 in Queensland as a whole.

The booths are equally exceptional for their lack of One Nation support. The six between them recorded only 16 Senate votes for One Nation at the 2016 election out of a combined total of 2189, for an overall share of 0.7%. While the regression model has provided a useful overview of the relationship between income and One Nation, it is clear the model is not useful as a guide to Indigenous voting behaviour.

5.1.4 Data analysis: income and the One Nation Senate vote

This section extends the analysis from the unemployment rate to income levels, again considering both the results from the 2016 census and the change recorded between the censuses of 2011 and 2016. As was established previously in the discussion of “pocketbook” voting effects, income growth is fundamental to consideration of economic voting.
Table 10: Regression results for One Nation primary Senate vote by polling booth at 2016 federal election: median weekly family income model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unstandardised B</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>Sig. p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(constant)</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Weekly Family Income ($’000)</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Spoken Only</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional (dummy)</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC dummy</td>
<td>-.023</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD dummy</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA dummy</td>
<td>-.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA dummy</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS dummy</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = 0.557$

As with the earlier consideration of unemployment, Table 10 and Table 11 show results for one model including median family income as a variable (the “rate” model), and another including the change in income variable, measured in percentage terms between the 2011 and 2016 censuses (the “growth” model).

Based on these results, the relationship between income and the One Nation Senate vote, considered independently of the other variables, is negative and highly significant both for rate model and the growth model. This indicates that higher rates of income or income growth were reflected in lower rates of One Nation support. This is as would be expected if voters were turning to One Nation due to a weak or deteriorating personal financial situation. In this case, each additional $1000 in median family income was associated with a 1.9% reduction in the One Nation vote, while each percentage point of growth from 2011 to 2016 was associated with a 1.2% reduction. This further supports the notion that economic factors played an important role in determining the level of support for One Nation.

As was the case for the income models in Table 4 and Table 5, statistically significant negative coefficients for Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania show that One Nation performed worse in these states than in New South Wales, while their
performance in Queensland was much stronger. Regarding South Australia and Tasmania, the lower One Nation vote is likely caused by strong support for other local minor parties, namely the Nick Xenophon Team in South Australia and the Jacqui Lambie Network in Tasmania. However, the Victorian results appear to reflect a general weakness in support for populism in that state.

The results for the language, regional and Indigenous variables were also similar in the income and unemployment models. Regional areas were stronger for One Nation regardless of both their income and unemployment levels, while the opposite was true for areas with large non-English speaking populations. As was the case for unemployment, there was no indication that the Indigenous population was negatively correlated with support for One Nation at the federal election, in contrast to the Queensland state election.
Table 1: Regression results for One Nation primary Senate vote by polling booth at 2016 federal election: median weekly family income growth model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unstandardised B</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>Sig. p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(constant)</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Weekly Family Income growth</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Spoken Only</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional (dummy)</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC dummy</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD dummy</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA dummy</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA dummy</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS dummy</td>
<td>-.027</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = 0.522$

The finding of a negative relationship between income and One Nation support is consistent with an analysis from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation which showed people from more educated backgrounds were less likely to vote for One Nation, which was consistent across all states.\(^5\) This finding is consistent with earlier studies indicating that One Nation voters tended to come from blue-collar backgrounds.\(^6\) Further, the ABC analysis confirmed One Nation were more likely to attract votes in disadvantaged suburbs compared to wealthier areas.

Studies on the first emergence of One Nation in the late 1990s indicated that voters were frustrated by both the Labor and Liberal Party’s failures to tackle issues such as unemployment and future job opportunities.\(^7\) Voters were concerned about the decline in protectionist policies as jobs were moved offshore to countries with

---


\(^7\) Gibson, McAllister and Swenson, “The Politics of Race and Immigration in Australia,” 826.
cheaper labour. This resonated strongly with blue-collar workers and small business owners. The data indicates that many areas with high populations of such voters have experienced a decrease in their median earnings from 2011 to 2016. A vote for One Nation is one way that some such voters may have expressed their discontent with the current economic climate and the two major parties.

Figure 8: Median family weekly income and One Nation primary vote (percentage) at 2016 Senate election by polling booth (Queensland)

R² = 0.144

5.1.5 Income plots: a comparison between Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria

The plots below use three states in a comparative study to illustrate the relationship between income and support for One Nation. These are Queensland, One Nation’s strongest state; Western Australia, one of three states where a Senator was elected in 2016; and the more progressive state of Victoria, where the party has never

---

8 Gibson, McAllister and Swenson, 826 – 830.
won a seat. Taken together, these charts show clear relationships when the results are viewed independently of state-level variation. While effects are evident for both unemployment and income, the relationship is distinctly clearer in the case of income.

Figure 8 illustrates the relationship between median family income in Queensland and the One Nation Senate vote in 2016. Figure 9 uses Western Australia as a further example. While support for the party in Western Australia was lower across the board than in Queensland, the general nature of the relationship was similar in both states.

Figure 9: Median weekly family income and One Nation primary vote (percentage) at 2016 Senate election by polling booth (Western Australia)

$R^2=0.112$

As noted previously, support for One Nation is considerably weaker in Victoria compared with Queensland and Western Australia. As illustrated in Figure 10, there were some exceptions where polling booths had a One Nation vote higher than 10%, but the majority did not exceed 5%. The areas with the lowest One Nation vote in Victoria were typically from the inner city of Melbourne and its wealthier “blue-ribbon” areas. Between the three graphs, Victoria appears to have fewer outliers compared to
Queensland and Western Australia. Nonetheless, the pattern is consistent in that each state has a negative relationship between median income and support for One Nation.

Figure 10: Median weekly family income and One Nation primary vote (percentage) at 2016 Senate election by polling booth (Victoria)

\[ R^2 = 0.177 \]

5.2 QUEENSLAND 2017 STATE ELECTION

This section extends the analysis to the Queensland state election of December 2017. Queensland state elections are of interest because of the high level of volatility over the past decade. This was best demonstrated by the rapid rise and fall of the Liberal National Party government of Campbell Newman. This government was elected with a massive majority in 2012, defeating the Labor government of Anna Bligh. However, it was removed from office after a single term at the 2015 state election. The scale of the swing at these elections is significant because it is consistent

The 2017 Queensland state election was also notable for rising support for minor parties, with the combined support for Labor and the LNP falling below 70%. There was a particularly strong increase in minor party support in the northern and western parts of the state. Most significantly, One Nation recorded an increase in support even in comparison with their strong Senate results at the 2016 federal election. One Nation won 13.73\% of the vote in at the 2017 state election, despite not running in 32 out of the 93 seats, compared with a Senate vote of 9.19\%. This made One Nation the third strongest party in the state, outpoling the Greens on 10.0\% of the first preference vote. While One Nation only won one seat, it is significant that that seat was Mirani in central Queensland, where the controversy over the Adani coal mine appeared to fuel support for the party among workers affected by the downturn in the mining industry.

Polling data prior to the election indicated that voters were concerned about a variety of issues, several of which were economic in nature. According to an opinion poll on the most important out of eight campaign issues, the leading issue was jobs, particularly outside south-east Queensland, where 29\% rated it very important compared with 40\% elsewhere. North Queensland was an area of concern for the two major political parties, with rising unemployment appearing to encourage support for minor parties.\footnote{Trenton Akers, “On the Bus: Inside the 2017 Queensland Election,” \textit{Queensland Review} 25, no. 1 (2018): 67.}

This section of the chapter uses similar methods for the 2017 Queensland state election results as were applied in the previous section to the 2016 Senate results. It should be noted that the dataset for Queensland is technically incomplete, given that One Nation did not have a candidate in every seat. Further, the seats where One Nation had candidates tended to be in regional areas. Nonetheless, if the patterns at the federal election in relation to income, language, and weakness in One Nation support in Indigenous communities have wider significance, it can be expected that they will have been replicated at the state election.
5.2.1 One Nation’s popularity and federal comparison

In most respects, the pattern at the 2017 state election was consistent with the Senate result in 2016. The seat of Mirani, which One Nation won with 32.0% of the primary vote, is covered by the federal electorates of Capricornia and Dawson, where One Nation recorded their fifth (15.6%) and eighth (13.3%) highest levels of support in the Senate. However, One Nation recorded a higher vote at the state election in Lockyer (34.4%), despite not winning the seat. Lockyer shares many of the booths situated within the federal electorate of Wright, where the Senate vote was 16.9%, the third highest in the state. One Nation recorded its highest Senate vote in the seat of Flynn (18.4%), which largely corresponds with the state seats of Burnett and Callide. The seats also recorded among the highest votes for One Nation at the state election, at 26.7% and 25.6% respectively.

Furthermore, in common with the Senate results, the weaker booth results for One Nation were in urban areas, particularly the inner city, and areas with high Indigenous populations. Two electorates that illustrate this are the federal seat of Moreton and the state seat of Toohey, which cover the same area of southern Brisbane. One Nation polled only 2.9% of the Senate vote in Moreton, their third weakest result in the state after the inner-urban seats of Ryan and Griffith. At the state election, One Nation had its third weakest result in Toohey.

Overall, these results are consistent with the urban-regional divide. While the 2016 census reveals that two-thirds of the Australian population live in capital cities, more than half of Queensland resides outside the capital, leaving a large proportion of people living outside the city compared to other states. The divide between urban and regional Queensland is not only reflected in election results, but also in how people perceive government policy.

Polling during the state election campaign identified a view that the state government was spending more on the metropolitan and coastal electorates than the bush, particularly when it came to infrastructure. The Labor government was perceived to have spent more on the south-east by 70% of country respondents, compared with

---

54% of Queenslanders as a whole.\textsuperscript{12} Despite these perceptions, a spending breakdown per capita showed that there was an allocation of $3,150 for regional infrastructure spending and only $1,709 in the south-east. The results also showed that city voters were more optimistic about their future than those in regional areas, particularly where One Nation performed strongly.

5.2.2 Income, unemployment and the 2017 state election

Based on the linear regression analysis of the 2016 Senate election, both income and income growth were negatively correlated with support for One Nation. This section considers whether these results remained consistent for the 2017 state election.

The relationship between income and One Nation support in 2017 is illustrated by Table 9 for median family income and Table 10 for the change in income between 2011 and 2016. This uses the same linear regression model for the state results as for the federal election in the previous section, excluding the state dummy variables, which are only relevant to a national election.

*Table 12: Regression results for One Nation primary vote by polling booth at 2017 Queensland state election: median weekly family income model*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unstandardised B</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>Sig. p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(constant)</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Family Income (\textdollar'000)</td>
<td>-.052</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Spoken Only</td>
<td>.215</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>-.132</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional (dummy)</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.238</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(R^2 = 0.213.\)

As was the case for the Senate, the results show a significant negative relationship between income and support for One Nation. However, the relationship is

less clear for the state election, which is illustrated by comparison of the plots for Queensland at the federal election (Figure 8) and the state election (Figure 11). While the coefficient was higher for the state election, the $R^2$ value was low, reflecting a higher number of outliers and a lack of clarity in the relationship.

Figure 11: Median weekly family income and One Nation primary vote (percentage) at 2017 Queensland state election by polling booth

For the non-economic variables, “English Spoken Only” and the “Regional” dummy variable had highly significant positive relationships at both elections. However, the coefficients for both, and especially for “English Spoken Only”, were higher for the state election. This indicates that these factors did more to explain the result at the state election. It should be noted again that One Nation did not contest 32 of the 93 seats and that the uncontested seats were disproportionately in metropolitan areas. However, it should also be observed that the state election was a stronger result overall for Labor, as the party won re-election with 35.4% of the primary vote and 51.2% of two-party preferred. At the 2016 federal election, Labor only
received 30.9% of the primary vote for the House of Representatives in Queensland and 45.9% of two-party preferred. The distinction between the two results may be that Labor performed better among low-income voters at the state election.

Table 13: Regression results for One Nation primary vote by polling booth at 2017 Queensland state election: median family income growth model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unstandardised B</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>Sig. p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(constant)</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Family Income growth</td>
<td>-.028</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Spoken Only</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>-.080</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional (dummy)</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.299</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = 0.152$.

Table 13 shows the results for the model with change in income from 2011 to 2016, corresponding to the Senate results in Table 5. Here too, the evidence for an effect is weaker in the case of the state election. While the coefficients were negative in both cases, for the state election the result was not statistically significant. Again, the coefficients for “English Spoken Only” and “Regional” were higher at the state election.

Table 14: Regression results for One Nation primary vote by polling booth at 2017 Queensland state election: unemployment model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unstandardised B</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>Sig. p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(constant)</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>.204</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Spoken Only</td>
<td>.235</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>-.132</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional (dummy)</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.292</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = 0.161$
Table 13 and Table 14 show the results for the models that use unemployment rather than income measures. As with the income models, the results are similar to those from the federal election, although the significance levels are somewhat lower. The coefficient for the unemployment rate suggests each percentage point was associated with a 0.204% increase in the One Nation vote, independently of the other variables. For unemployment growth, the effect was 0.126% for each percentage point of increase in the unemployment rate.

Table 15: Regression results for One Nation primary vote by polling booth at 2017 Queensland state election: unemployment growth model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unstandardised B</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>Sig. p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(constant)</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Growth</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Spoken Only</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>-.085</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional (dummy)</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.309</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( R^2 = 0.153 \)

### 5.2.3 Indigenous Voters and the 2017 State Election

The results from the Senate election indicated that support for One Nation was particularly weak in Indigenous communities. As noted previously, this complicates the relationship between income and support for the party. This section replicates the study of Indigenous voting patterns from the Senate in the previous section, with Table 13 identifying the 10 highest Indigenous population booths and their vote shares for One Nation. The booths are in most cases in north Queensland, within the federal electorates of Leichhardt, Herbert and Kennedy.

Given that state elections attract fewer candidates than state-wide Senate elections, support for One Nation is higher across the board. However, the relative weakness of support for the party in these booths is illustrated by comparing the results with those in the column recording the total One Nation vote for the electorates in which the booths were located. For the most part, these booths had median family
income of less than $1000 and generally lower support for One Nation than booths elsewhere in their electorates.

Table 16: Indigenous population and One Nation primary vote at 2017 Queensland state election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Booth</th>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>ON Vote: Booth</th>
<th>ON Vote: Electorate</th>
<th>Indigenous Population</th>
<th>Median Weekly Income (2016)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cherbourg</td>
<td>Nanango</td>
<td>5.84%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>98.42%</td>
<td>$766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarrabah</td>
<td>Mulgrave</td>
<td>2.09%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>98.04%</td>
<td>$822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napranum</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>7.21%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>95.47%</td>
<td>$770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woorabinda</td>
<td>Gregory</td>
<td>5.02%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>94.39%</td>
<td>$716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Island</td>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>2.99%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>93.95%</td>
<td>$927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope Vale</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>7.24%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>92.95%</td>
<td>$745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wujal</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>8.41%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>92.20%</td>
<td>$682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurukun</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>1.33%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>90.84%</td>
<td>$677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kowanyama</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>2.26%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>90.68%</td>
<td>$841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horn Island</td>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>8.18%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>89.74%</td>
<td>$1582</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Half the booths in Table 13 are in the state electorate of Cook, where 36.4% of residents identified as either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander at the 2016 census compared to 4% across Queensland and 2.8% nationally. It is established that Cook is an outlier because the lower income areas did not vote One Nation, which is also relevant to the corresponding federal electorate of Leichhardt. This point is illustrated by Table 13, showing the result of a simple bivariate linear regression of the One Nation vote and income levels for booths in Cook.

Table 17: Regression results for One Nation primary vote by polling booth in electorate of Cook at 2017 Queensland state election: median family income model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardised B</th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig. p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFY2016</td>
<td>4.564E-5</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contrary to the broader pattern, this shows income was in fact positively associated with One Nation support within the electorate. Other state electorates that experienced negative income growth, such as Mirani and Lockyer, appeared more inclined to vote for One Nation for economic reasons. Based on the results from Cook, there is further evidence that the association between economic voting and One Nation does not apply to Aboriginal Australians.

5.2.4 Coal mining, economic decline and One Nation support

As noted in the beginning of the state election analysis, many of the election issues during the campaign were economic in nature. While voters were concerned about jobs, there was also controversy around the coal industry. The proposed Adani coal mine in north Queensland was a contentious issue for the Labor government. Environmental groups and the Greens argued that the government’s support for the project showed it was weak on climate change action and was caving into climate sceptics.13 Conversely, the mining industry claimed that building the Adani mine, along with other infrastructure projects in Queensland, would create 10,000 new jobs directly and indirectly.14

The statistically significant effects for change in income and unemployment are consistent with election results showing One Nation performed well in areas that experienced economic decline after 2011, in large part reflecting the downturn in the mining industry. The electorate of Mackay was retained by Labor at the 2017 election, but One Nation performed very strongly, recording 22.6% of the vote. The pattern is typified by the Mackay South booth, covering an area that experienced 36% income decline from $1694 in 2011 to $1073 in 2016, with unemployment nearly double the state average at 14%. At the state election, 21% of the formal votes from this seat went to One Nation.

5.3 CONCLUSION

In summary, this research points to an economic element in voting for One Nation. This is a significant finding, given the view of Hellwig and McAllister that

---

14 McCall, 588.
economic voting has been weak in Australia due to the short electoral cycle, compulsory voting, party identification and assignment of responsibility for policy outcomes.\textsuperscript{15} However, it may be notable that the evidence for income effects was clearer at the federal election, perhaps reflecting a tendency of voters to attribute responsibility for the economy to the federal government.

Particularly in regional Queensland, many voters on lower incomes suffered from deteriorating economic conditions before the 2016 and 2017 elections, and these areas turned strongly to One Nation. Although the findings from this study have found the relationship between income and voting for One Nation to be statistically significant, this was not relevant to Indigenous voters and those who spoke a language other than English. Evidently, race and immigration were important factors entwined in the party’s philosophy, but the economic insecurity felt by One Nation voters was a notable factor in the party’s appeal.

\textsuperscript{15} Hellwig and McAllister, “Does the Economy Matter?” 237.
Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

6.0 INTRODUCTION

In addressing the 2016-2017 rise in support for populist minor parties in Australia, this thesis addresses three questions: whether economic voting can explain this phenomenon; whether economic motivations could be better explained by absolute measures of economic well-being or change in economic status; and whether economic voting intersects with other voting factors. It concludes that both absolute economic well-being and feelings of economic insecurity have played an important role in boosting support for parties such as One Nation, but that these factors form an inter-relationship with cultural concerns that limit the party’s support among non-white voters.

Taken together, chapters one to four provide a basis for considering how economic factors might explain the 2016 rise in support for One Nation. The first chapter examined past research on why people vote for minor parties, in both Australia and comparable jurisdictions. For much of Australia’s political history, significant minor parties arose out of splits in the major parties or, in more recent decades, through the rise of post-materialist politics with the Australian Democrats and later the Greens. However, the further increase in minor party voting over this period has been achieved by parties of the right such as One Nation, and by populist leaders such as Clive Palmer, Jacqui Lambie and Bob Katter.

Chapter one considered whether the rise of populist parties and leaders was due to cultural or economic factors. Populist parties and causes are often associated with xenophobic tendencies and an emotional sentiment towards what the country “used to be”. However, these attitudes can be rooted in economic concerns about job security. The impact of globalisation and neoliberalism has been perceived as negative for workers in manufacturing industries in western countries. These voters may be turning to populist minor parties in an example of “reward-punishment” voting against the major parties collectively.

The second chapter examined the early years of One Nation’s history. Pauline Hanson rose to attention when she was disendorsed by the Liberal Party for her comments against Aboriginal Australians during the 1996 election campaign. At the
1998 Queensland state election, One Nation won 11 seats at the expense of both the Nationals and Labor. The factors discussed in this chapter to explain the success of One Nation were both economic and cultural, with the party’s voters tending to be older, white, employed in blue-collar occupations and living in regional or outer urban areas.

Chapter three further explored the economic circumstances in the lead-up to the two elections studied in the thesis, and their potential to explain the rise in support for populist minor parties. The most significant of these related to the downturn in the mining industry in central and northern Queensland, an area of strong support for Pauline Hanson and One Nation.

Chapter four was the main case study of this thesis. The chapter analysed the connection between support for One Nation and the economic situation of the surrounding area, in terms of family income and the unemployment rate. Given the success of minor parties at the 2016 federal election, this provided an opportunity to study the link between economic factors and minor party voting. While past literature had indicated weak and inconsistent effects for economic voting in Australia, the aim of this study was to provide a contemporary analysis on the topic in view of an unprecedented rise in minor party voting over the course of the previous decade that the existing focus on strength of party identification failed to fully explain.

6.1 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The aim of this research project was to consider if economic voting was a factor in the rise in support for minor parties in recent electoral cycles in Australia, particularly in relation to populist minor parties. This reached a peak with the Senate results from the 2016 Australian federal election, at which One Nation won four seats (two in Queensland, one in Western Australia and one in New South Wales). One Nation was used a case study for economic voting, with a focus on the 2016 federal election and the 2017 state election in Queensland.

Economic voting had previously been viewed as a weak concept in Australia due to factors identified by Hellwig and McAllister: a short electoral cycle, compulsory voting, party identification and assignment of responsibility for policy outcomes.¹

However, many hypotheses regarding the recent rise of right-wing populist parties have been based on economic factors. Such hypotheses propose that voters have become frustrated as their prosperity has declined, prompting opposition to policies identified with the “globalisation” agenda that has been pursued in Australia with the support of both the major parties.²

Conversely, it has been suggested that One Nation voters are primarily motivated by cultural anxiety. An analysis on the topic by journalist and commentator David Marr stated that Pauline Hanson had succeeded by tapping into fears about race with her outspoken views on immigration, particularly around Muslim immigration.³ However, fears of immigration are not created in a vacuum; they are motivated by job insecurity and the scarcity of government services.⁴ The aim of this thesis has been to gain an understanding of economic factors and the impact these have had on the One Nation vote.

Based on the results from this study, there is evidence that economic factors had a significant influence in many voters’ abandonment of the major parties. While the party is notable for the concentration of its support in Queensland, the analysis of national results from the 2016 Senate election indicated the relationship between income and unemployment was relevant across the board. Under the reward-punishment model, the voter would typically vote for the opposition if either their own economic situation (pocketbook) or the national situation (sociotropic) had worsened. By contrast, good financial management would typically be rewarded with re-election of the incumbent government.⁵ However, in Australia recent election cycles have shown that voters may instead be rejecting both established parties in favour of minor parties.

Nevertheless, the relationship between economic voting and One Nation is not applicable to all sections of the community. Areas with high populations of Aboriginal

² Murray Goot, “Pauline Hanson’s One Nation: Extreme Right, Centre Party or Extreme Left?” *Labour History* 89 (2005): 101.
and Torres Strait Islander people on low incomes, such as the Queensland state electorate of Cook, did not translate to stronger results for One Nation. This exception is likely to be linked to One Nation’s statements and policy positions on Indigenous people, notably Pauline Hanson’s claim that Indigenous Australians received preferential treatment over white Australians.

The distinctive behaviour of Indigenous communities illustrates the point that cultural factors are important in determining support for One Nation, and that economic factors cannot provide a complete explanation. This is also reflected in the divide between city and country voting. The pattern at the 2016 federal and 2017 Queensland elections was consistent in that the same areas were strong for One Nation at both elections, especially in rural Queensland. Both elections also demonstrate that inner-city areas are consistently weak for One Nation.

6.2 ECONOMIC FACTORS AND ONE NATION

In relation to the first research question, it was noted that the party identification model of voter behaviour had been used to explain the weakness of economic voting in previous decades. However, the results of the 2016 election were at odds with the party identification model as there were increasing numbers of voters supporting minor parties, despite Australian Election Study findings that voters are not forming strong attachments to these parties.\(^6\) This raises the possibility that voting on short-term assessments of the economic situation is becoming more important in the Australian context and can be useful in explaining the rise of minor party voting.

The literature also shows that economic voting may occur even when the economy is strong if voters believe they are falling behind the rest of the community. Voters who reject the major parties may be motivated by either their real or perceived economic circumstances. This is significant for the second of the three research questions, which seeks to establish whether the economic motivations reflect absolute levels of income or change over the preceding years. The statistical analysis in chapter four thus included measures for change in income and unemployment over the five-

---

year period before the two elections, as well as overall measures of median income and the unemployment rate.

Despite the uninterrupted economic growth Australia has experienced since the early 1990s, many Australians have reported they have not benefited from the nation’s prosperity. A 2018 survey by Community Pulse found 44% of respondents said they had not gained anything from the last 26 years of economic growth. A majority of the respondents believed those who gained the most in the last 26 years were large corporations, senior executives, white collar workers and foreign investors. This may be a factor in explaining why some people vote for populist right-wing parties, particularly if they have an anti-globalisation stance.

During Pauline Hanson’s initial period in parliament from 1996 to 1998, she appealed to voters in rural Queensland and tapped into fear of unemployment and regional economic decline. Despite economic prosperity, people feared their jobs would be moved offshore, impacting both their own lives and those of their children. Hanson targeted her campaign on economic factors that affected workers outside of urban areas. Such a phenomenon was again illustrated by figures from the 2016 Australian Electoral Study series cited by David Marr. The results showed 68% of respondents agreed their financial position in the last 12 months had either worsened a little or a lot, and that this result remained consistent when respondents were asked about the state of the economy. In comparison to other voters, One Nation supporters were the most pessimistic about the economy.

Support for One Nation appeared to be especially concentrated in areas that had been hit by a downturn in the mining industry. This was demonstrated by the results of the 2019 federal election in the four federal electorates with the highest share of the workforce employed by coal mining: One Nation received 17.0% of the vote in Capricornia, 17.5% in Flynn, 13.1% in Dawson and 21.6% in the New South Wales seat of Hunter (the other three being in Queensland). This compares with a total of

---


8 Committee for Economic Developments of Australia.


10 Marr, The White Queen, 53.
8.0% out of the 59 lower house electorates that were contested by One Nation candidates.

Debates during federal and Queensland state elections about the proposal by Indian company Adani to build a coal mine in the Galilee Basin suggest these concerns have been driven by a combination of economic and cultural factors. The Greens and other environmental groups were against the project due to the environmental impacts of coal mining, whereas supporters of the mine said it would create jobs at a time of regional unemployment.¹¹

6.3 CULTURAL ANXIETY, INDIGENOUS AND ETHNIC VOTING

While the results from the 2016 election suggest a significant effect for both income and unemployment, it is evident that many other variables are required to satisfactorily explain the growth in support for One Nation. For this reason, the statistical analysis also includes variables for “speak English only” and the Indigenous population. This is relevant to the third research question, relating to the intersection between economic and other voting factors.

In each of the models, there was a highly significant statistical relationship between the English-only population and One Nation support. At the state election, One Nation support was inversely correlated with the size of the Indigenous community, despite these communities having low incomes and high unemployment. These results establish that economic influences on the level of One Nation support occur within clear cultural boundaries, and that the party does not represent a protest vote option for Indigenous voters and non-English speaking immigrants.

While some One Nation voters were primarily motivated by Hanson’s maverick statements and profile in the media, her success also reflects underlying fear based on cultural anxiety. As discussed in chapter one, a report on minor party voting by the Grattan Institute found factors such as loss of personal status, concerns about immigration and loss of community power had created the perception that the common

voter had been left behind. Further, “Australia first” parties like One Nation appealed to voters who responded to nostalgic appeals to the Australia of their childhood.

Race is a factor in explaining why people vote for far-right parties, which also correlates with economic factors. Far-right parties often exploit cultural anxieties by arguing that the country’s way of life is being destroyed by people they perceive to be alien to it. One Nation has frequently targeted voters opposed to policies that support Indigenous people, as seen in Pauline Hanson’s maiden speech in 1996 and again before the 2019 federal election, when she argued that Aboriginal people should be required to prove their Indigenous ancestry when claiming some government services.

Evidently, Hanson’s controversial views are unpopular in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, which are marked by low incomes. This was demonstrated in chapter four in the limitations of models based exclusively on income and employment. Generally, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people earn less money, as seen in the 2016 ABS data. Ordinarily there is a statistically significant relationship between low income and support for One Nation, but an exception must clearly be observed for those who are Indigenous or speak a language other than English at home. This factor points to the limits of a purely income-based explanation for One Nation support.

Like the Indigenous vote, areas that were multilingual recorded weaker support for One Nation despite generally having low average incomes. This was evident in the weak support for One Nation in the Sydney seats of Blaxland (1.84% Senate vote in 2019) and Watson (1.33%) and the Melbourne seats of Calwell (1.33%) and Hotham (0.59%), despite them ranking in the lower third among electorates nationally for median family income. Significantly, these electorates also ranked among the top eleven for share of non-English speakers.

---

13 Grattan Institute.
15 These figures are based on 2016 census data adjusted for electoral boundaries at the 2019 federal election, are provided by election analyst, William Bowe.
6.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

In the literature review of this thesis, it was established that a gap exists in the literature on economic voting in Australia, particularly in relation to declining support for the major parties. Evidence in the Australian literature indicating weak economic voting effects was based on electoral research conducted prior to increases in minor party voting and was strongly influenced by Labor’s election wins at times of high interest rates and unemployment in 1990 and 1993.

One possibility is that explanations for the weakness of economic voting in Australia assumed two-party competition. However, bipartisan support for neoliberal economic policies may have led dissatisfied voters to abandon the major parties altogether. Another supposed limitation on economic voting was that Australian voters mostly held international forces responsible for the state of the economy. This may not apply to the rise of populist protest voting against globalisation, in which voters punish the major parties collectively due to their joint responsibility for manufacturing jobs going overseas, rather than alternating between them in the manner traditionally understood by the reward-punishment model of economic voting.

Despite economic effects, the racial and cultural identity of a voter remains important in determining support for One Nation. Voters are more inclined to vote for One Nation if they are neither Indigenous nor speak a language other than English. One Nation support in large part reflects cultural anxiety among white voters, which the party exploits by positioning migrants as the source of social and economic problems. However, the potential for these concerns to influence voter support for populist minor parties such as One Nation varies according to specific economic circumstances, which were clearly a factor in the pattern of support for the party at the 2016 federal and 2017 Queensland elections.

6.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study was based on Australian factors, there is the potential to compare One Nation’s support base with other minor parties, particularly populist parties. Comparing One Nation to other populist right-wing leaders (such as former President Donald Trump) is not a realistic comparison given the establishment of the Republican party. There is value in studying voter behaviour in a class context (within Australia). While McAllister and Makkai’s study provided some insight into modern class voting,
adding other variables (such as cultural engagement) to the study of minor party voters could further the understanding of voter behaviour.
References


———. “Pauline Hanson’s One Nation: Extreme Right, Centre Party or Extreme Left?” *Labour History* 89 (2005): 101-119.


Wright, Jessica. “With Memories of '93, the Opposition Ready...